DOUBLE ISSUE!

ANOTHER FINE KAPPA PUBLICATION

The RING

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING" ®

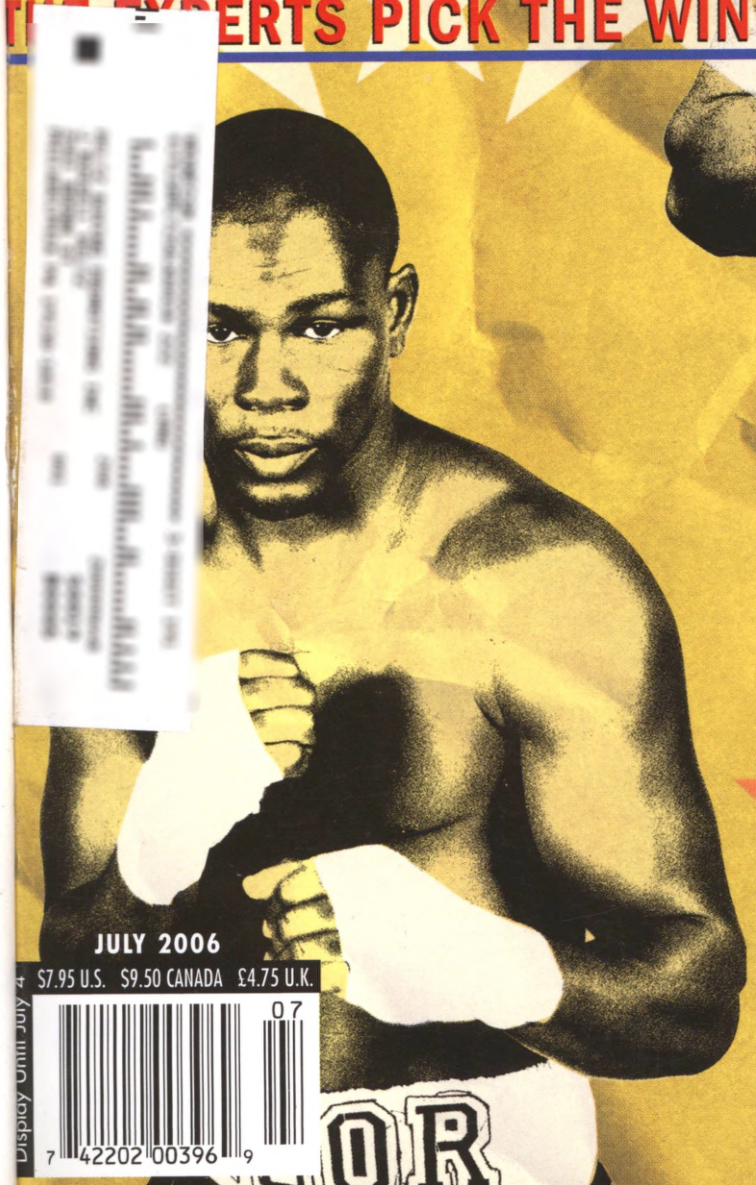
THE RING

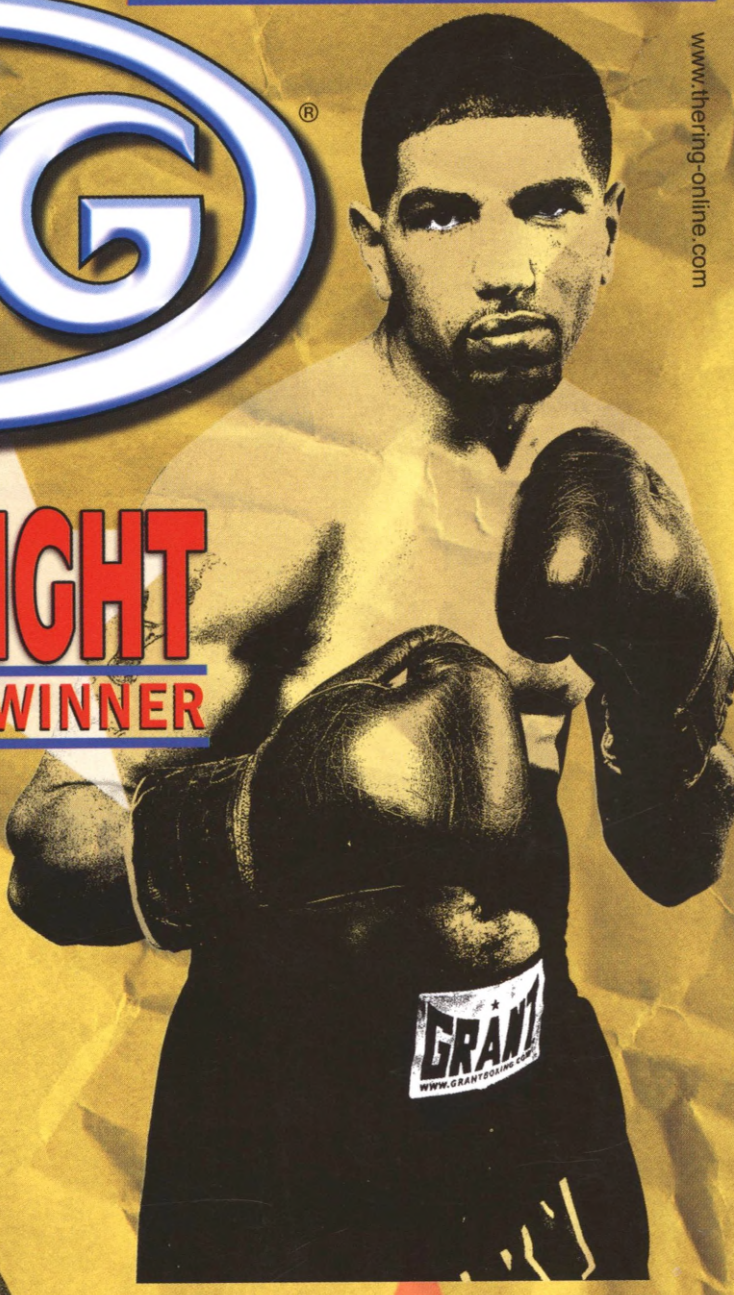
www.thering-online.com

THE STATE OF THE GAME: OUR ANNUAL REPORT

TAYLOR vs. WRIGHT

THE EXPERTS PICK THE WINNER





EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE:

CALZAGHE vs. LACY

MOSLEY vs. VARGAS

PLUS ...

A PICTORIAL TRIBUTE TO

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON

JULY 2006

$7.95 U.S. $9.50 CANADA £4.75 U.K.

07

7 42202 00396 9

HBO Boxing After Dark®

Hard-Hitting.

HBO SPORTS

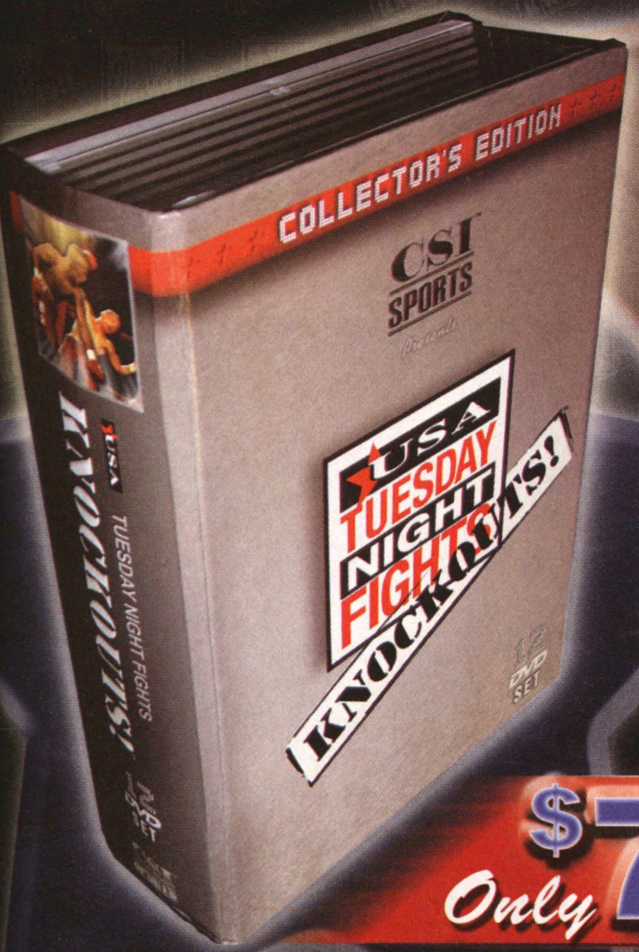
Subscribe online at HBO.com AOL Keyword: HBO ©2005 Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. ® Service marks of Home Box Office, Inc.

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

USA TUESDAY NIGHT FIGHTS™

KNOCKOUTS!

12 DVDs, 12 Hours, The Greatest Knockouts Ever!



THIS DVD COLLECTION INCLUDES KNOCKOUTS FEATURING:

• Lennox Lewis • George Foreman •
• Roy Jones Jr. • Riddick Bowe •
• Bernard Hopkins • Larry Holmes •
• Shane Mosley • Fernando Vargas •
• Andrew Golota • Shannon Briggs •
• Orlando Canizales • Arturo Gatti •
• Rafael Ruelas • James Toney • Butterbean •
• Vitali Klitschko • Vinny Pazienza •
• Roberto Duran • Zab Judah • Jorge Paez •
AND MANY MORE...

FREE INSIDE!

Directory of all the fighters in the series and pictures of the KNOCKOUTS! RingGirls

Only $79.95 +S&H

12 DVD SET

For More Info: www.knockoutdvd.com

To Order: (800) 962-2110 VISA DISCOVER MasterCard

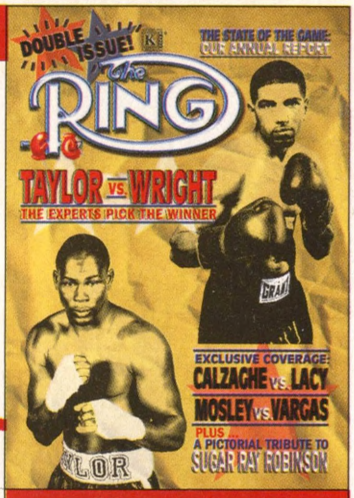
CSI SPORTS™

USA Tuesday Night Fights KNOCKOUTS! © 2005 CSI Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. USA Tuesday Night Fights KNOCKOUTS! and CSI Sports logos are CSI Entertainment, Inc. trademarks worldwide. Unauthorized usage of these names or logos are strictly prohibited.

Contents

The Ring Double

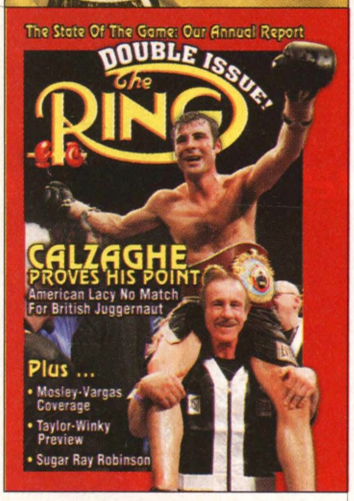
July 2006



U.S./Canada Cover

Jermain Taylor by **Jan Sander/HBO**
Winky Wright by **Chris Farina**

Cover Design: **Jim Malloy**



U.K. Cover

Joe Calzaghe by
John Gichigi/Getty Images

Cover Design:
David Romanosky

Features

34 Calzaghe Proves His Point ... Emphatically!
Lacy Wasn't A Shaw Thing After All
By Brian Doogan

42 After Shutting Vargas' Eye ...
Mosley Opens The Eyes Of His Critics
By Ivan Goldman

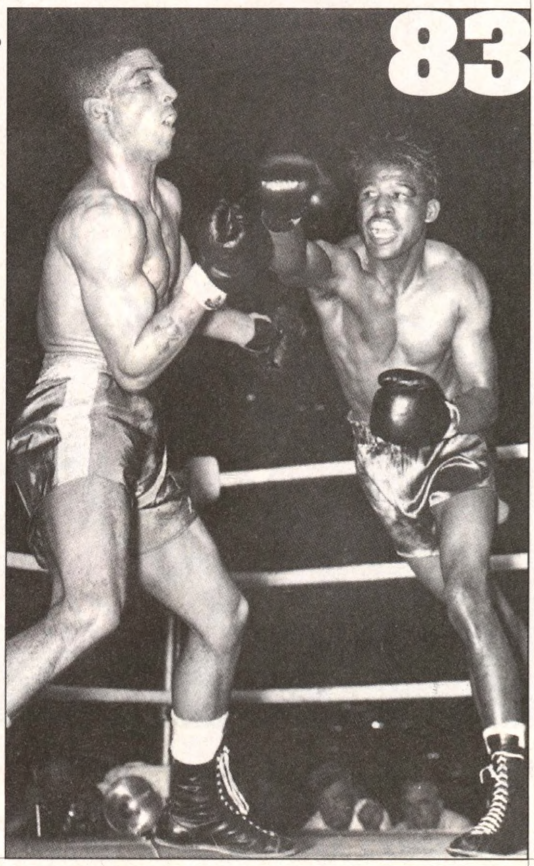
48 State Of The Game
Our Exclusive Annual Report
By Eric Raskin

66 Taylor Does The Wright Thing ...
But Will It Give The Fans Something Worth Watching?
By Don Stewart

74 Hail Augustus!
Boxing's Journeyman King
By William Dettloff

83 Sugar Ray Robinson
A Pictorial Tribute To The Greatest Fighter Of All-Time

92 The Ring Update: Tony De Marco
"I Enjoy Entertaining"
By Don Stradley



Ringside Reports

102 Fighter Of The Month & Ringside Reports

Ratings

17 Ratings Analysis

18 The Ring's International Ratings & Records

PHOTO BY JOHN GIGHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Departments

8 **Ringside** *by Nigel Collins*

10 **Round One**

20 **Ryan Out Loud** *by Jeff Ryan*

24 **Digging Deep** *by Ivan Goldman*

28 **Camera Clicks**

30 **New Faces: Jean Pascal**
by Paul Salgado

100 **Worldwide Fight Results**

114 **The Ring Classic:**
Oscar Is The Boxer Of The '90s
by Bernard Fernandez

123 **On The Move**
The Saga Of Two Fighters Going In Different Directions
by Joe Santoliquito

124 **Hall Of Fame Gallery: Nino Benvenuti**

126 **The Fight Doctor** *by Margaret Goodman, M.D.*

128 **Come Out Writing**

130 **Looking Ahead** *by Joe Santoliquito*

Opening Shot

"I'll see your left to the temple and raise you a right to the jaw"

The pot for the showdown between Joe Calzaghe and Jeff Lacy included The Ring belt as the world champion of the super middleweight division, and the Welshman went all-in from the first round until the 12th. Lacy never folded when the chips were down, but it was clear that Calzaghe wasn't on a bluff. He was holding winning hands every time—and those winning hands did a number on poor Lacy.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Volume 85, No. 6 July 2006

The RING

Back in the late-1970s and early-'80s, I spent a lot of time carpooling to various fight venues with two other journalists. The long drives gave us plenty of time to talk candidly about damn near any subject you can think of, but boxing was always the mainstay of our conversations.

There were a lot of things we agreed about and a lot we didn't, but there was one reoccurring debate that always found me in the minority: It was the firmly held opinion of my two Caucasian roadies that white guys can't fight. In fact, they had a running joke about white fighters "assuming the position," which, in this case, was not a reference to the common phrase used by police when preparing to frisk and cuff a suspect. Instead, it simply meant that a white fighter had hit the canvas.

I always maintained that they were wrong, but at fight card after fight card there was much more evidence to bolster their argument than mine. Sure, there were a handful of white fighters of that era—Mike Rossman, Sean O'Grady, Gene Hatcher—who won major belts, but none of them, not even Ray Mancini, stayed on top very long. Unless I wanted to use decades-old examples, there wasn't much factual support for my view.

My pals talked about "slow-twitch" and "fast twitch" muscles and had fun teasing me as yet another white fighter tumbled to the floor. Nonetheless, I always maintained that there were socioeconomic reasons for the scarcity of top-notch white fighters and that it had always been folks on the lowest rungs of the financial ladder who were driven to trade punches for a living. Their counter argument was that back when the Italians, Irish, and Jews (mainly immigrants or sons of immigrants) ruled boxing, most of them avoided the best black fighters, which was true in many cases.

These days the three of us don't get together anywhere near as often as we did back then, but if we did, you can bet I'd be crowing instead of eating crow.

The recent emergence of Ricky Hatton and Joe Calzaghe as genuine world champions would surely take considerable steam out of their side of the dispute. And it doesn't end there. Take a quick glace at THE RING Ratings *(pages 18 and 19)* and you'll see a number of high-ranking white fighters—Zsolt Erdei, Tomasz Adamek, Mikkell Kessler, Arthur Abraham, Felix Strum, Arturo Gatti, and Scott Harrison come readily to mind.

It's no accident that all of the above, except for Gatti, are from Europe, which began suffering from economic problems immediately following World War II, and judging by current unemployment figures, many of those problems still persist.

For many decades African-Americans and Latinos have dominated boxing in the U.S., but due to a shift from a well-paid manufacturing economy to a poorly paid service economy, many of the problems that have for so long hampered American minorities and Europeans are now impacting all of our citizens, regardless of race.

Hard times make hard men, not race, so don't be surprised if more and more of our white youth turn to boxing as more and more jobs go overseas and the financial picture gets bleaker.

I haven't had an opportunity to talk about this recent trend to my old road buddies, but it would be next to impossible for them to deny that the "position" a significant number of white fighters are now "assuming" is at or near the top of the boxing heap.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

NATHANIEL S. FLEISCHER
Founder
(1888-1972)

STUART M. SAKS
Publisher

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Nigel Collins

MANAGING EDITOR
Joseph Santoliquito

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR
Greg Stevens

ART DIRECTORS
David Romanosky
Olivia Wierzbicki
Jim Malloy

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Bethany Lawler

PRE-PRESS DIRECTOR
Cliff Campo

IMAGING DIRECTOR
Kelly A. Grant

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Eric Raskin

SENIOR WRITER
William Dettloff

PRESIDENT
Despina McNulty

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

SR. V.P. FINANCE/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Philip Ketonis

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
David Tyler

RETAIL SERVICES DIRECTOR
Briana Coppola

NATIONAL CIRCULATION MANAGERS
Robert Nucci
Dave Hagman

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Vincent Bellissima
(215) 643-6385
vbellissima@kappapublishing.com

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT
Dianne Weber

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
London Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 2085
Marion, OH 43306-8185
(815) 734-1212

The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 85, No. 6, is published monthly by London Publishing Co., 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8121. Single copy price $7.95 ($9.50 in Canada, £4.75 in U.K.). Subscription price $83.40 in the U.S., $99.00 in Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2006 London Publishing Co. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (215) 643-6385. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 641 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010, U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.
Printed in U.S.A.

FIRSTCOMP **A Championship Weekend in Boxing's Hometown** I ♥ NY

ANNUAL INDUCTION WEEKEND JUNE 8-11, 2006

International Boxing Hall of Fame - Canastota, New York

BANQUET OF CHAMPIONS

Reminiscing . . . Livingstone Bramble and Lou Duva share fight stories with Banquet crowd.

FIST CASTING

Everlasting . . . Fist cast by Diego Corrales.

PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Marvelous . . . Marvin Hagler waves to fans.

Hooray . . . Grand Marshal Ryan O'Neal enjoys fans along Parade route.

PROFESSIONAL BOXING SHOW

Fight Night . . . Popular boxers featured in action-packed bouts at Turning Stone Resort & Casino.

MUSEUM GROUNDS

Autographs . . . George Foreman spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

INDUCTION CEREMONY

A Moment in Time . . . Barry McGuigan showing fans his Induction Certificate.

BOXING CARD SHOW

A Collector's Dream . . . Boxing memorabilia for fans. The world's only all-boxing show draws collectors from throughout the world.

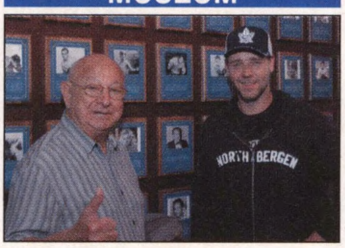
GOLF TOURNAMENT

Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

COCKTAIL PARTY

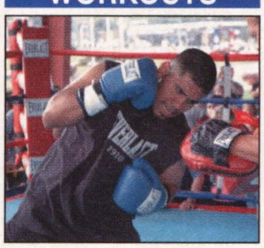
Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM



Angelo Dundee and actor Russell Crowe tour the museum together.

WORKOUTS



Juan Diaz works the bag mitts during daily public workouts.

RINGSIDE TALKS

Having Fun. . . Micky Ward, Lou Duva, and Bert Sugar telling stories.

Yes! Please send me a brochure of the Schedule of Events and ticket information

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

The Showplace of Boxing
CANASTOTA, NY
BOXING HALL OF FAME

Int'l Boxing Hall of Fame
PO Box 425 • Canastota, NY 13032
Call: 315-697-7095
or Fax: 315-697-5356
www.ibhof.com
Madison County Tourism 1-800-684-7320

Night Of Recovery

Ambassadors of the fight game gathered at the IBEW Hall in Dorchester, Massachusetts, recently to help raise money for The Gavin House, a South Boston recovery home for alcoholics coming out of the prison system. The home, which has helped thousands since being established in 1962, has also inspired the Cushing House, a treatment home for teens, and the Edwina Martin House, a treatment center for women with substance abuse problems. The homes often struggle financially, and for the past few years organizer Jimmy Melvin and local rehabilitation specialist Paul McDevitt have called on some of boxing's finest to help out.

Among the guests at the 2006 Night of Recovery fundraiser were Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Micky Ward, Tony DeMarco, Carmen Basilio, Vinny Paz, 1960 Olympic gold medalist Wilbert "Skeeter" McClure, Freddie Roach, Robbie Sims, Drake Thadzi, Joe DeNucci, Peter Manfredo Jr., and master of ceremonies Teddy Atlas.

Boston Mayor Thomas Menino presented the ESPN2 boxing analyst with a special award recognizing March 10, 2006, as "Teddy Atlas Day." An emotional Atlas thanked the mayor, and gave a touching speech about his father's work with the poor. But despite the cordial nature of his Boston visit, Atlas promised to remain a Yankees fan.

A dozen autographed gloves were auctioned, and those in attendance were treated to a selection of film clips chronicling the history of great New England fighters. The evening's festivities were interrupted by a phone call from Muhammad Ali; he wanted to say a special hello to his old Olympic teammate McClure. Hagler, making a rare New England appearance since relocating to Italy, made a point of recognizing the contributions of 93-year-old Charles "Skeets" Scioli, the Boston Garden's former ring announcer who was on hand for the event.

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

Atlas receives a special award from Boston's Mayor Menino

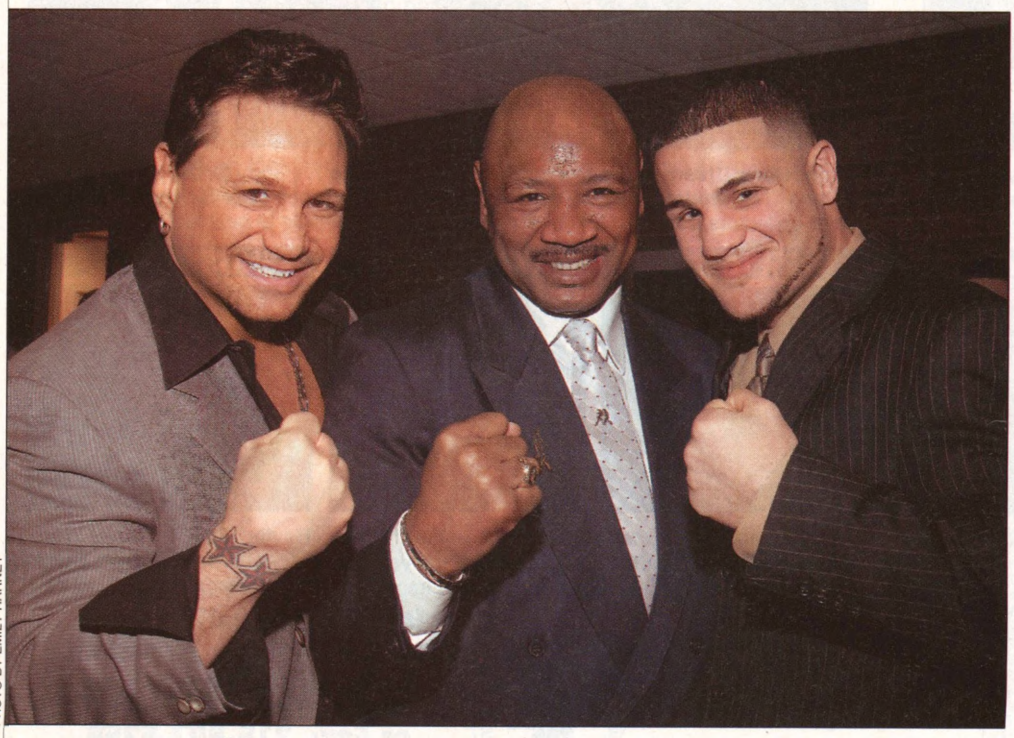


PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

Paz, Hagler, and Manfredo were among the celebrities at fundraiser

If the evening had a flaw, it may have been its length—the folks in attendance wanted to eat, drink, and be merry, but the ceremony dragged on in spots. Still, everyone involved seemed happy to be there. Heavyweight Kevin McBride was stopped at the door because no one recognized him, but even he had fun once he got past security. The life of the party, however, was Basilio—he filled up on pasta and fondled any woman who came near him. Still, Atlas reminded us of our reasons for being there.

"This evening is to help people who have slipped," said Atlas. "We all slip now and then. All of us."

—Don Stradley

Dancing With Danger

On the surface, things seem to be going well for former junior middleweight champion Kosyta Tszyu as he swirls around a TV studio with partner Luda Kroiter on Australia's adaptation of *Dancing With The Stars*. By all accounts, he's much better than Evander Holyfield, who looked like he had two left feet competing in the U.S. version of the hit show. But a caldron of trouble could be bubbling on the back burner as the 36-year-old Tszyu contemplates his next move off the dance floor.

For starters, he is tangled up in a legal battle with former manager Susie Bennell, who has launched a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against him to recover unpaid wages. There is also a rumor that promoter Vlad Warton is considering legal action after hearing that Tszyu plans to fire him.

Even so, perhaps the most troubling Tszyu news is that he plans to fight again, and according to *The Sunday Telegraph*, his longtime trainer Johnny Lewis is dead set against it.

"I'm dreading the day Kostya calls and says, 'Johnny, I'm ready to fight again.'" Lewis told writer Peter Badel. "I don't want Kostya going into another war. Unfortunately, my honesty mightn't be enough for Kostya."

Lewis' concern stems from the frightful beating Tszyu, 31-2 (25), took in his last fight, when Ricky Hatton battered him so badly he quit on his stool following the 11th round. Tszyu spent time in the hospital following the loss to Hatton, and although Tszyu has tried to downplay his injuries, it has been reported that his blood pressure was dangerously high, his brain swollen, and he had blood in his urine.

"I know his pride was hurt," said Lewis, "but so what? He has a wife and family to consider, and in this business, you don't flirt with danger. I've seen too many fighters go one fight too many and pay the price."

Not surprisingly, Tszyu's current manager, Matt Watt, sees things differently.

"No book deal or TV appearance or endorsements can ever compare to the purse from a really big fight," said Watt. Respected Aussie boxing writer Grantlee Kieza seemed to agree, writing, "Boxing is a brutal, bloody sport, but Tszyu still has a chance to milk three decades of sweat for one last earn."

But it was Lewis, who has trained Tszyu throughout his professional career, who delivered the best summation of the situation when he quipped, "I'd rather he focused on dancing with the stars than be sitting on his backside looking at them."

—Nigel Collins

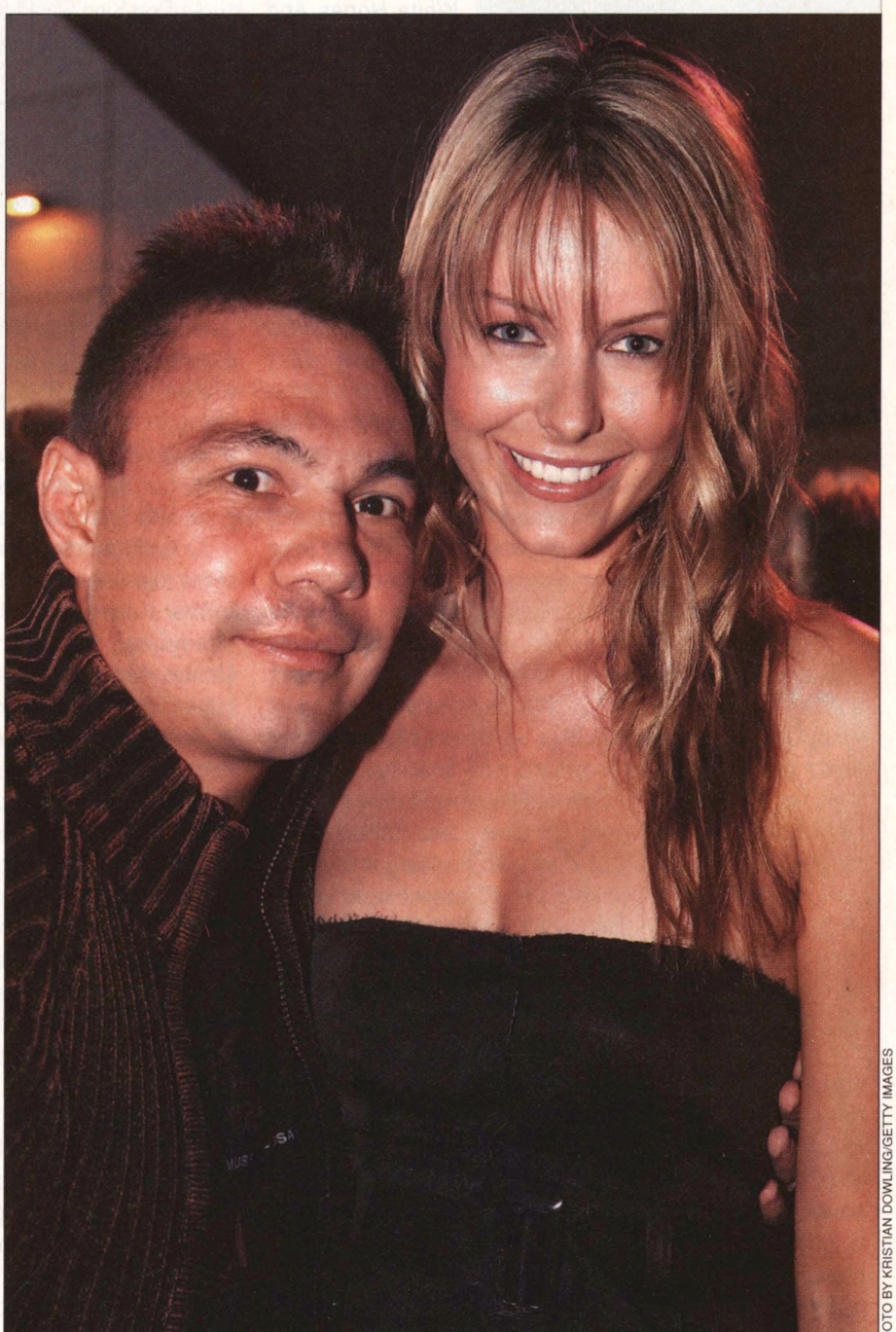
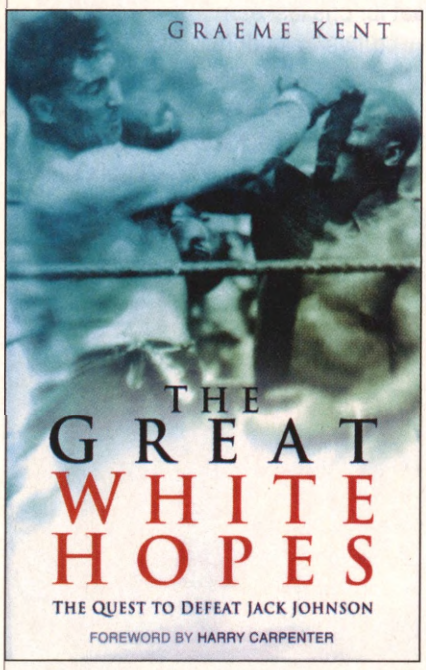


PHOTO BY KRISTIAN DOWLING/GETTY IMAGES

Cubby Tszyu cuddles up to former Miss Universe Jennifer Hawkins

Boxing Bookshelf

It would be almost impossible to write a dull book about the White Hope era in boxing. In fact, there is such a wealth of material it's a wonder that the shelves aren't full of tomes about the characters, crookedness, and absurdity surrounding the white-hot campaign to unhorse heavyweight champion Jack Johnson. Perhaps the virtuosity of John Lardner's *White Hopes And Other Tigers*, originally published over a half-century ago, set the bar too high.



But now British author Graeme Kent has comfortably cleared it with *The Great White Hopes: The Quest To Defeat Jack Johnson* (Sutton Publishing Limited, 244 pages, hardcover, £18.99), a well-researched, enlightening, and very entertaining look at the "seven years of trouble and madness" spent in frantic search for a heavyweight to restore the pride and honor of the Caucasian race besmirched when a haughty black man won the greatest title in sports in 1908.

Beginning with Victor McLaglen, Johnson's first challenger who later went to Hollywood and won an Academy Award, Kent calls the roll of the " ... Would be white challengers [who] rolled off the assembly lines with the regularity of Henry Ford's new Model Ts, although with less durability." Even the ones whose stories are fairly well-known—Stanley Ketchel, Luther McCarty, Jim Flynn, Al Palzer, Jess Willard—Kent makes worth reading about again with his lively and slightly sardonic narrative. The careers of such lesser Hopes as Iron Hague, Tom Kennedy, Jim Coffey, and the besotted Sandy Ferguson, to name a few, are treated with equal deftness and lack of sentimentality, as are the handlers and plotters who wheedled them into the spotlight:

"Joe Coffman stole Ketchel from any or all of half a dozen barflies who had considered themselves to be custodians of the middleweight's future. Willus Britt stole Ketchel from Coffman, and Wilson Mizner was about to steal Ketchel from Britt, only the latter died first. This must have disappointed Mizner, who had a larcenous soul and would almost certainly rather have procured Ketchel by chicanery than just inheriting him."

There isn't a single page that isn't engrossing and just plain fun to read in this stellar contribution to ring literature.

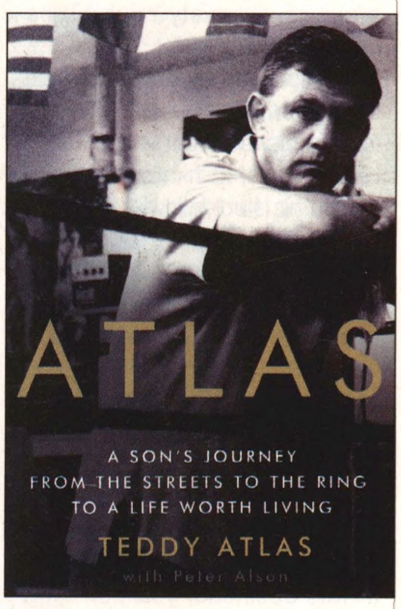
—Pete Ehrmann

To say boxing trainer/commentator Teddy Atlas is one of the sport's most fascinating and combustible characters is an understatement. And nowhere is this belief better confirmed than in his no-holds-barred autobiography, *Atlas: A Son's Journey From The Streets To The Ring To A Life Worth Living* ($24.95, 276 pages, Ecco, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers), written in conjunction with Peter Alson. The book is written in the pull-no-punches style that matches Atlas' personality, and to put it down without reading it in one sitting is a difficult task, as Atlas shows himself to be a master storyteller.

As Don King would say, "only in America" could a doctor's son become a wayward youth, hang out with the wrong crowd in rough sections of Staten Island, New York, brawl and steal, go to jail at Riker's Island, turn to boxing upon his release, become Mike Tyson's first trainer, and then go on to become one of boxing's best teachers before becoming a TV analyst. If anyone thought he would end up boxing instructor and friend to such varied personalities as dancer Twyla Tharp, wiseguy Sammy "The Bull" Gravano, and actor Willem Dafoe, even Atlas himself would have told you to have your head examined.

Atlas' volatile temper is well known, and on several occasions the reader learns how it shaped the man both from a positive and negative standpoint. Atlas shows no reluctance to admit his mistakes. His fists and mouth have brought him the satisfaction gained from adhering tc principles, but have also brought him regret and the loss of potentially lucrative opportunities.

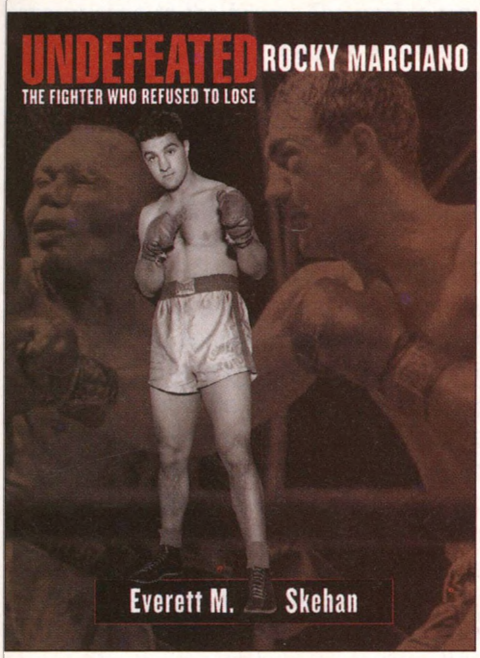
One of the more fascinating sections is Atlas' description of his relationship with former heavyweight champion Michael Moorer. As trainer and father figure to Moorer, Atlas gives readers very interesting insights into Moorer's mind. Their relationship would have made a great thesis for a psychology major. That being the case, it would have been nice if Atlas had also expounded on what made his later protégés heavyweight Michael Grant and light heavyweight Elvir Muriqi tick before their freefalls from contention. Yet neither garners a mention.



Nonetheless, the readers will gain much insight into Theodore Atlas Jr., a complex, fiercely loyal, and direct man. One may even come away with lessons applicable to one's own life.

—Mike Greenhill

Fans of Rocky Marciano can't go wrong purchasing a copy of *Undefeated: Rocky Marciano—The Fighter Who Refused To Lose* (Rounder Books, 292 page, hardback, $18.45) by Everett M. Skehan. It is an expanded version of Skehan's 1977 biography of "The Brockton Blockbuster" titled, *Rocky Marciano: Biography Of A First Son* and a real bargain at a lower price than some paperbacks.



Along with the complete original text, there is a new section called "Echoes Of A Legend," featuring reflection by Rocky's brothers, Peter and Sonny, assessments of Marciano by several well-know trainers, and a chapter written by Stanley Buaman, a former staff photographer for the *Brockton Enterprise-Times*, who took close to a thousand photos of Marciano, dozens of which of which are included in this reissue.

It is, however, the original text, which has been out of print since in the U.S. since the early-1980s, that readers will find the most interesting. Although Skehan has taken considerable literary license with most of the dialogue, he did interview many people, including family members who knew Rocky well and shared their personal remembrances with the author.

Almost every bout Marciano had, including streetfights and his brief amateur career, are documented in effusive details, but it is Rocky's life outside of the ring that provides the most interesting aspect of the book. Many of the things you've heard about Rocky are confirmed: He was an obsessive trainer driven by a fear of poverty and an overwhelming desire to succeed, he hated manager Al Weill and promoter Jim Norris, and loathed to spend his own money. And, yes, he did bury money, a habit that began when he and his teenage buddies won a bundle at a crap game.

Skehan is at his best exploring Marciano's character. One of Rocky's boyhood pals was Izzy Gold, "an outspoken schemer who enjoyed taking risks and loved to gamble. This was the type of person that attracted Rocky throughout his life." It was this trait that led Marciano to associate with underworld types, including mobsters Frankie Carbo, Vito Genovese, and Pete DiGravio.

Skehan also does an excellent job of detailing Marciano's post-boxing years, when the unhappy, overweight ex-champ tried to find a substitute for the excitement of the ring by constantly keeping on the move, virtually living out of a suitcase, partying with big-spending jock sniffers, and making dozens of unorthodox business deals. Ironically, Rocky was feeling better about himself than he had in years, having shed many pounds for his so-called computer fight with Muhammad Ali, when he perished in a 1969 plane crash.

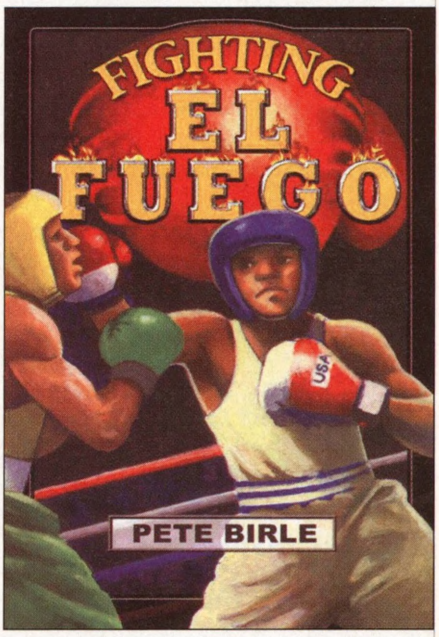
In many ways, especially when dealing with his ring exploits, the book is an unabashed paean to the only undefeated heavyweight champion in history. But Skehan's journalist chops cut close to the bone when writing about Marciano the man, which allows the book to hold up well more than 30 years after it first rolled off the presses.

—Nigel Collins

Fighting El Fuego (Scobre Press, 110 pages, soft cover, $9.95) by Pete Birle is a fictional story about a troubled Hispanic youth named Paco, who uses boxing as a way to channel his problems and tendency toward violence into something positive.

Unlike most of the books reviewed in THE RING, *Fighting El Fuego* is geared toward youths between the ages of 8 and 15 and is meant to be a pedagogical tool for teachers. It includes chapter questions as well as a number of essays that are intended to relate Paco's experiences with those of students in order to stimulate critical thinking. There are two different versions, one for fourth-graders and another that requires a more advanced reading level, aimed at seventh-graders.

The story is quite compelling as Paco uses the discipline, guidance, and exercise that the local PAL amateur boxing program provides in order to navigate his multi-dimensional world that includes a domineering father, an older beloved brother who's serving time in prison, and an unnatural rage that takes control of him. Author Birle is a former elementary school teacher and an avid boxing fan who wrote the book "to turn on kids to both reading and the Sweet Science."



Birle hit the bull's eye on both counts with this entertaining read and detailed look into the trials and tribulations of not only amateur boxers, but of Hispanic youth in general. *Fighting El Fuego* is highly recommended to parents who would like to get their kids interested in the sport. Information on purchasing this title is available at: www.scobre.com.

—Brent Matteo Alderson

TV Fights of the Month

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
2/17/06	Lamont Peterson W 10 Joe Moreno	ESPN2	jw	C+	B-	C
Hey, if you can't knock a guy out, you better be able to work for all 10 rounds, and Peterson did						
2/17/06	Alonzo Butler KO 3 Terry Porter	ESPN2	h	C-	C-	F
Doesn't anyone in some commission or another care that this was a bogus result? Hello?						
2/17/06	Delvin Rodriguez W DQ 4 Alexis Divison	ESPN2	jm	C	B	D+
This might have gotten interesting if Divison had played by the rules						
2/17/06	Kevin Kelley KO 2 Juan Carlos Ramirez	Telefutura	l	C+	C+	C+
It can't be that Kelley can still fight a little, can it?						
2/18/06	Ivan Calderon W 12 Isaac Bustos	PPV	s	B+	C+	C+
Calderon may be the best pure boxer in the business, but at 105 pounds, can he make anyone care?						
2/18/06	Brian Viloria W 12 Jose Antonio Aguirre	PPV	jf	B+	A-	B-
Viloria finally coming into his own; this was impressive						
2/18/06	Antonio Margarito KO 1 Manuel Gomez	PPV	w	A	C-	B-
Any reason Margarito shouldn't get the winner of Mayweather-Judah? Or Gatti-Baldomir?						
2/24/06	Joel Casamayor KO 5 Antonio Ramirez	PPV	l	B-	D+	C-
Casamayor slumming it a little here, but it's okay; he's fought only top guys the last four years						
2/24/06	Glen Johnson W 12 Richard Hall	PPV	lh	A-	B+	C+
Give Hall credit for staying in there; we wouldn't have blamed him if he bailed midway through						
2/24/06	Oscar Diaz KO 5 Russell Jordan	ESPN2	w	C+	C+	B-
Jordan didn't look like much until he landed; solid fight and good win for Diaz						
2/24/06	Juan Lazcano W 10 Ben Tackie	Telefutura	w	B+	B+	C+
Another good performance by Lazcano, who may be in line for title shot whether or not he's really earned it						
2/25/06	Joel Julio KO 2 Wilmer Mejia	PPV	jm	C	D+	C-
We're ready for Julio to up the competition; how about you?						
2/25/06	Calvin Brock KO 6 Zuri Lawrence	PPV	h	B	C+	B
That's the kind of knockout fighters dream about						
2/25/06	Jhonny Gonzalez KO 8 Mark Johnson	PPV	b	A-	C+	C
Don't cry for Johnson; he's been around a long time and will probably be in the Hall of Fame in five years						
2/25/06	Shane Mosley KO 10 Fernando Vargas	PPV	jm	A	A-	B+
Put your hand over your left eye; you can still read this, right?						
3/3/06	Jose Figueroa D 10 Larry Mosley	ESPN2	w	C+	B+	B+
Sometimes tough is as good as talented; excellent scrap that warrants a rematch						
3/3/06	Demetrius Hopkins W 12 Mario Jose Ramos	ESPN2	jw	C+	C+	D
So much for Hopkins' newfound power; this was dull						
3/3/06	Rutsam Nugaev KO 5 Anthony Mora	Showtime	jw	C-	B+	D-
We recommend Mora immediately go on an all-donut diet; oh yeah, and pick a different career						
3/3/06	Vic Darchinyan KO 8 Diasdado Gabi	Showtime	fl	B+	C+	B-
So much for not looking for one punch all night; Darchinyan one of the purest punchers around						
3/3/06	Javier Mora KO 7 Kirk Johnson	FOX SN	h	D+	C+	D
A lesson for all fighters: never quit; the other guy might blow out his knee						
3/3/06	Sam Soliman KO 6 Raul Munoz	FOX SN	jm	B-	D+	C
Give Soliman credit for getting right back on the horse, even if this was a bit of a mismatch						
3/4/06	Miguel Cotto KO 8 Gianluca Branco	HBO	jw	A	C+	C
Can anyone name the last time a fighter was stopped by a hook to the shoulder?						
3/4/06	**Joe Calzaghe W 12 Jeff Lacy**	**Showtime**	**world sm**	**A**	**A**	**B**
Well, it's about damn time						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

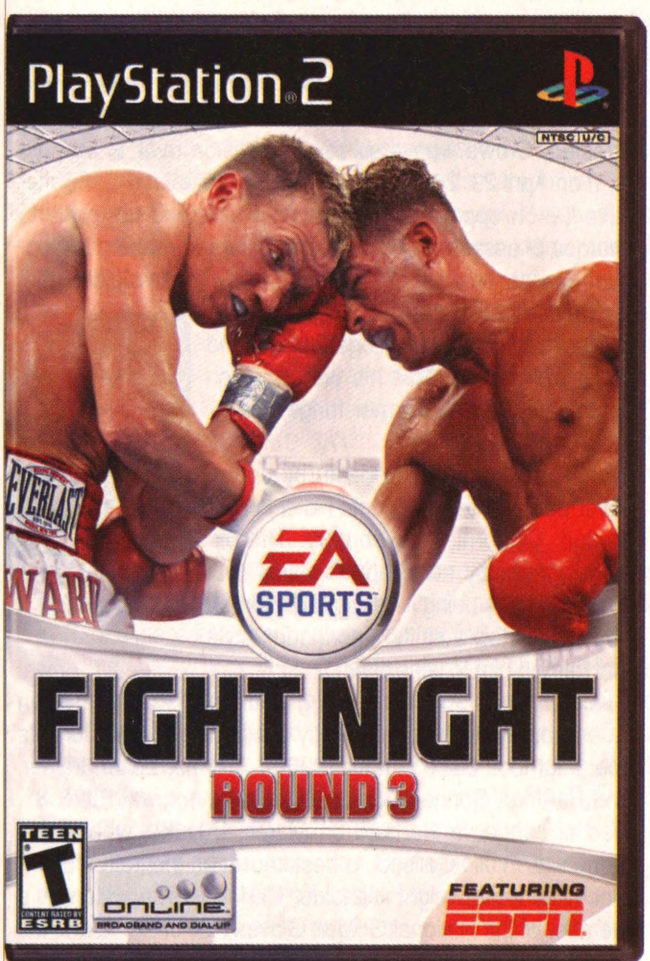
Computerized Combat

Maybe they should have called EA Sports new video game "Fight Night: Three Rounds" instead of "Fight Night Round 3," because this year's iteration is really three separate games—one existing in the past, one in the present, and one pointing to the future. The past is represented by the PSP version, which niftily repackages all of last year's Round 2 game in a sharp-looking, well-playing handheld version. You might actually prefer the nicely saturated colors and slick animations of the PSP over the other current console versions. Because of the PSP's control limitations, the excellent Total Punch Control system that deftly powers the blows on the consoles has been remapped to the face buttons. It takes some getting used to, but it works pretty well—as long as you don't rely too much on blocking blows.

Representing the present are the PS2 and Xbox versions of Round 3—nice games, but they're still the weakest of the bunch. Fight Night has always been a thinking man's fighting game, rewarding skill and strategy over simple button-mashing. This year's game has really worked out the kinks in the game balance, resulting in better bouts. The heart of the game is still the stellar career mode, but unfortunately, that heart has been compromised by a heaping slab of commercialism in the form of trophies based on winning corporate-sponsored events. Last year's ranking system, while present in the PSP game, is also AWOL, so you never really know where your fighter stands.

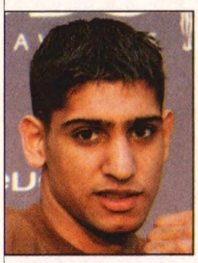
The must-buy is the game that is the future—the outstanding Xbox 360 version that reinvents the fight game entirely. The rebalancing of the franchise is most evident here—you'll really need to block and counterpunch intelligently to excel. But the most obvious advance here is the graphics. They are simply amazing (especially in HD) but they completely serve the game, alleviating the need for health or stamina bars as they eloquently depict every aspect of the fight. You'll see how tired or damaged your boxer is, you'll watch him wince in increasing pain with every punch to the gut, you'll marvel at the ripples whipping across a kayoed opponent's face as your right drops him. It's amazing, it's incredibly engrossing, and it just might be the best Xbox 360 title yet.

—Robert Coffey

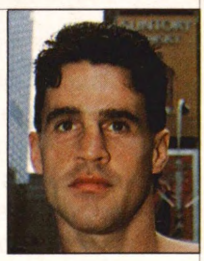


Outside the Ropes

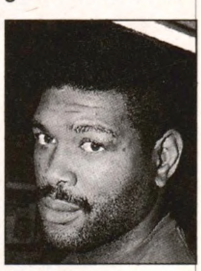
British junior welterweight prospect **Amir Khan** has signed a multimillion-dollar sponsorship deal with sportswear giant Reebok. The former Olympian, who won a silver medal at the 2004 Athens Games, is the first ever boxer to be signed by Reebok, which will produce a signature line of boxing equipment, including gloves, trunks, and boots that Khan will wear and endorse. Khan will also be the new face of Reebok's "I Am What I Am" campaign. "This is an amazing thing for me," said Khan. "I'm giving Asian kids out there a path to follow. This has given me a real boost in my quest to be world champion and I look forward to promoting boxing with Reebok in the U.K. and beyond" ... **Rasheda Ali**, the daughter of former heavyweight champion **Muhammad Ali**, has written a book titled *I'll Hold Your Hand So You Won't Fall: A Child's Guide To Parkinson's Disease*. Rasheda said the book grew out of her effort to help her children understand what was happening to their grandfather ... The brother and sister promotional team of **Dino Duva** and **Donna Brooks** have ended their partnership. Dino Duva now becomes the sole owner of Duva Boxing LLC and will continue to promote **Samuel Peter**, **Kendall Holt**, **Brian Minto**, and **Raymond Biggs**. Donna Brooks will start her own new firm and continue to promote **Oscar Diaz**, **Shaun George**, and **Damien Fuller**. "We both want to pursue our own separate interests," Duva and Brooks said in a joint statement. "This is completely amicable and we sincerely wish each other the best." Duva Family patriarch and legendary boxing manager and trainer **Lou Duva** agreed, saying, "Both of them have my 100 percent blessing. I am extremely happy for Dino and Donna. I will be there to support both of them to help them achieve continued success in whatever they do" ... Former world junior featherweight champion **Paulie Ayala**, THE RING's 1999 Fighter of the Year, has purchased 16,793 square feet of land in his hometown of Fort Worth, Texas, where he will build a boxing and fitness gym ... Former WBA lightweight and junior lightweight titleholder **Joey Gamache**, 39, has filed a lawsuit against **Arturo Gatti** in federal court, alleging breach of contract in their February 26, 2000, bout at Madison Square Garden, which Gatti won via second-round knockout. According to the suit, by contract, both fighters had to weigh 141 pounds, but Gatti's weight was "falsely represented." Gamache was hospitalized for two days after the bout, and the suit claims: "As a result of the devastating punishment inflicted by the severely overweight defendant ... [Gamache] has sustained severe and permanent neurological damages and injuries." Gamache has a separate complaint pending before the New York State Court of Claims against the **New York State Athletic Commission** over the administration of the weigh-in ... In other courtroom action, Los Angeles-based manager **Frank Espinoza** has filed a lawsuit against his former attorney, **Nick Khan**. The suit claims that Khan began representing junior featherweight champion **Israel Vazquez** in conflict with Espinoza's existing contract witht the fighter. "[Khan] was trying to get Israel Vazquez to free himself of his contract with Espinoza," alleged Roger Diamond, the attorney representing Espinoza in the case ... Heavyweight **Dale Crowe** has been indicted for the murder of a 23-year-old man said to be a close friend 3½ years ago. He is being held on a $1.6-million bond at the Hamilton County Justice Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Crowe, 27-8-3 (17), has fought many top heavyweights, including **Greg Page** (in a bout that left Page in critical condition), **Sam Peter**, **DaVarryl Williamson**, **Michael Moorer**, and **Fres Oquendo**. Authorities in Hamilton County, Ohio, charged Crowe with aggravated murder, murder, and aggravated robbery. In his final bout before being arrested, Crowe won a six-round decision over **Shane Wijohn** on April 29, 2005, in Auckland, New Zealand ... Former **Mike Tyson** opponent **Peter McNeely** pleaded not guilty to charges of assault and battery and unarmed robbery in Dedham (Massachusetts) District Court following an incident that took place outside of the Shamrock Pub in Norwood. McNeely allegedly punched a bar patron and stole his wallet, which contained $200 ... Former fringe heavyweight contender **Mike "The Bounty" Hunter**, 45, was shot to death by undercover police at the St. Moritz Hotel in Hollywood, California, in February. The ex-fighter allegedly attacked an officer, but the shooting is being investigated. Hunter, 26-7-2 (8), had a shifty, unorthodox style that carried him to wins over **Oliver McCall**, **Pinklon Thomas**, **Ossie Ocasio**, and **Tyrell Biggs** during his up-and-down career, but he was hampered by substance abuse. Hunter's final bout took place in May 1996 ... Former boxer, trainer, and Hartford, Connecticut, boxing legend **Johnny Duke**, 81, died of cancer in Hartford on March 4. Duke, whose real name was Giulio Gallucci, is best known as the trainer of former WBA welterweight titleholder **Marlon Starling**. He was a member of the National Golden Gloves Hall of Fame and the Connecticut Boxing Hall of Fame.



Khan: New face of Reebok



Gamache: Suing Gatti



Hunter: Shot to death by police

Quotable

"I found it hard to watch the video; it looks like I'm drugged. I was a punching bag out there."

—Jeff Lacy, reflecting on his one-sided loss to Joe Calzaghe

"I haven't had any training for this—but if I see an eyeball rolling across the floor, I'll know it's time I got involved."

—Mike Tyson, discussing his debut as a referee at the World Cage Fight Championship in Manchester, England

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended March 19, 2006

Heavyweights: Calvin Brock switches places with Monte Barrett, moving from seventh to sixth. Barrett is downgraded because of inactivity.
Cruiserweights: No changes.
Light heavyweights: No changes.
Super middleweights: Major changes as Joe Calzaghe (number one last issue) becomes the first RING super middleweight world champion, thanks to his unanimous decision over Jeff Lacy, who drops from third to fifth. The reshuffling moves Mikkel Kessler from second to first, Markus Beyer from fourth to second, Anthony Mundine from fifth to third, and Danny Green from sixth to fourth. Everyone from seventh to 10th also moves up one place, making room for Chad Dawson at 10.
Middleweights: No changes.
Junior middleweights: No changes.
Welterweights: Shane Mosley jumps from fourth to second on the strength of his stoppage of Fernando Vargas. Mosley stated afterward that he plans on campaigning at welterweight, where Zab Judah and Cory Spinks each fall one place to accommodate Mosley's advancement.
Junior welterweights: No changes.
Junior lightweights: No changes.
Featherweights: Chris John vaults from eighth to first after his unanimous 12-decision upset of Juan Manuel Marquez, who falls from first to third. Everyone from third to seventh drops one place due to the reorganizing.
Junior featherweights: Somsak Sithchatchawal debuts at number-one, based on his kayo of Mahyar Monshipour (first last issue), who announced his retirement after the fight.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior bantamweights: Hawk Makepula trades places with Jose Navarro, moving up from eighth to seventh, after Navarro's loss to second-ranked Masamori Tokuyama.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior flyweights: Kermin Guardia (eighth last issue) departs due to more than a year of inactivity, which moves up everyone from eight to 10 one place each and makes room for Muvhuso Nedzanni at 10.
Strawweights: Ivan Calderon surges from third to first based on his unanimous decision over Isaac Bustos, who slips from sixth to 10th. Calderon's move drops Yutaka Niida from first to second and Muhamad Rachman from second to third. Everyone rated from sixth to 10th gets bumped up one place as a result of Bustos' demotion.
Pound-for-pound: Juan Manuel Marquez (sixth last issue) exits after losing to Chris John. Joe Calzaghe debuts at nine, thanks his one-sided victory over Jeff Lacy. Rafael Marquez, Jose Luis Castillo, and Antonio Tarver each move up one slot each to replace the void left by Juan Manuel Marquez.

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Junior Welterweight
2. **Winky Wright**
   Middleweight
3. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **Marco Antonio Barrera**
   Junior Lightweight
5. **Ricky Hatton**
   Junior Welterweight
6. **Rafael Marquez**
   Bantamweight
7. **Jose Luis Castillo**
   Junior Welterweight
8. **Antonio Tarver**
   Light Heavyweight
9. **Joe Calzaghe**
   Super Middleweight
10. **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**
    Flyweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **TheRing-online.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended March 19, 2006

PHOTO BY MEDHI FEDOUACH/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Somsak Sithchatchawal is the number-one junior featherweight, after upsetting Mahyar Monshipour

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by The Ring are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between The Ring's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI 39-2-1 (20)
2. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD 41-5-2 (33)
3. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI 69-4-3 (43)
4. **LAMON BREWSTER** Los Angeles, CA 33-2 (29)
5. **JOHN RUIZ** Methuen, MA 41-6-1 (28)
6. **CALVIN BROCK** Charlotte, NC 28-0 (22)
7. **MONTE BARRETT** Queens, NY 31-4 (17)
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 45-3 (40)
9. **SAMUEL PETER** Las Vegas, NV 25-1 (21)
10. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 43-0 (31)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 34-1-1 (21)
2. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 23-2-1 (15)
3. **SERGEI DZINDZIRUK** Germany 31-0 (21)
4. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA 26-3 (22)
5. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana 37-2-1 (31)
6. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 29-3-1 (20
7. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 38-10-1 (20)
8. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO** Spain 60-6 (40)
9. **RODNEY JONES** Lafayette, LA 37-3-1 (22)
10. **ALEJANDRO GARCIA** Mexico 25-1 (24)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 37-0-1 (20)
2. **TAKASHI KOSHIMOTO** Japan 39-1-2 (17)
3. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 44-3-1 (33)
4. **HUMBERTO SOTO** Mexico 38-5-2 (22)
5. **INJIN CHI** South Korea 30-3-1 (18)
6. **ROCKY JUAREZ** Houston, TX 26-1 (19)
7. **SCOTT HARRISON** Scotland 25-2-2 (14)
8. **VICTOR POLO** Colombia 36-5-3 (26)
9. **JOAN GUZMAN** Dominican Republic 24-0 (17)
10. **SPEND ABAZI** Denmark 32-1 (10)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 39-3 (29)

1. **SOMSAK SITHCHATCHAWAL** Thailand 46-1-1 (37)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico 56-4-1 (36)
3. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 24-2 (17)
4. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGYM** Thailand 24-0 (15)
5. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 27-1-1 (18)
6. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG** Thailand 43-2-1 (18)
7. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 23-0 (14)
8. **GABULA VABAZA** South Africa 22-0-1 (5)
9. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 22-0 (8)
10. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 27-1 (25)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 35-3 (31)
2. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 19-2 (6)
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 50-2-2 (35)
4. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 32-4 (28)
5. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 18-1 (15)
6. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 34-4 (20)
7. **CRUZ CARVAJAL** Mexico 25-13-1 (21)
8. **RICARDO VARGAS** Mexico 39-11-3 (13)
9. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN** Thailand 65-9 (42)
10. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 18-0-1 (6)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: O'NEIL BELL
Atlanta, GA 26-1-1 (24)

1. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 33-3-2 (26)
2. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 19-0 (10)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
France 31-3 (21)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
England 45-12-2 (29)
5. **CARL THOMPSON**
England 34-6 (25)
6. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
Guyana 21-2 (17)
7. **DALE BROWN**
Canada 35-4-1 (22)
8. **PIETRO AURINO**
Italy 34-2 (16)
9. **DAVID HAYE**
England 15-1 (15)
10. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 34-1 (26)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ANTONIO TARVER
Orlando, FL 24-3 (18)

1. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Miami, FL 44-10-2 (29)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 23-0 (14)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 49-4 (38)
4. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 38-3-1 (23)
5. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
France 47-2 (31)
6. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 30-0 (21)
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 39-3 (23)
8. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 24-2 (18)
9. **HUGO GARAY**
Argentina 25-2 (13)
10. **ERIC HARDING**
West Hartford, CT 23-3-1 (7)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE
Wales 41-0 (31)

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 37-0 (28)
2. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 34-2 (13)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 25-3 (20)
4. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 21-2 (19)
5. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 21-1 (17)
6. **MANNY SIACA**
Puerto Rico 20-5 (18)
7. **OTIS GRANT**
Canada 38-2-1 (17)
8. **ROBIN REID**
England 38-5-1 (27)
9. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 22-0 (16)
10. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 22-0 (15)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: JERMAIN TAYLOR
Little Rock, AR 25-0 (17)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 50-3 (25)
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 46-4-1 (32)
3. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 20-0 (17)
4. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 25-1 (11)
5. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
England 40-3 (35)
6. **SAM SOLIMAN**
Australia 32-8 (13)
7. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 20-1 (8)
8. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
Canada 23-2 (13)
9. **SCOTT DANN**
England 24-2 (17)
10. **KELLY PAVLIK**
Youngstown, OH 27-0 (24)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CARLOS BALDOMIR
Argentina 42-9-6 (12)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 33-4 (24)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 42-4 (36)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
Brooklyn, NY 34-3 (25)
4. **CORY SPINKS**
St. Louis, MO 34-3 (11)
5. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 26-1 (12)
6. **ARTURO GATTI**
Jersey City, NJ 40-7 (31)
7. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 25-1 (23)
8. **JOSE ANTONIO RIVERA**
Worcester, MA 37-4-1(24)
9. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 36-3 (11)
10. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
Denmark 37-1 (27)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 40-0 (30)

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 35-0 (24)
2. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 26-0 (22)
3. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
Australia 31-2 (25)
4. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 54-7-1 (47)
5. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 33-1-2 (19)
6. **CARLOS MAUSSA**
Colombia 19-3 (16)
7. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 26-2-1 (17)
8. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
Washington, D.C. 31-4-1 (17)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 40-8-1 (26)
10. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
Vero Beach, FL 38-3-1 (17)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: DIEGO CORRALES
Las Vegas, NV 40-3 (33)

1. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
Miami, FL 32-3-1 (20)
2. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 36-3-1 (27)
3. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 28-0 (14)
4. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 32-3 (24)
5. **ACELINO FREITAS**
Brazil 37-1 (32)
6. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Las Vegas, NV 27-1 (16)
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
Mexico 42-3 (29)
8. **ISAAC HLATSHWAYO**
South Africa 23-0 (9)
9. **LAVKA SIM**
Mongolia 21-4-1 (18)
10. **RICKY QUILES**
Puerto Rico 39-6-3 (8)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 41-3-2 (32)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 61-4 (42)
3. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 48-4 (34)
4. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 23-1-1 (12)
5. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 45-3-1 (36)
6. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 45-2-1 (32)
7. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
Bellflower, CA 41-6-1 (24)
8. **ALEX ARTHUR**
Scotland 22-1 (17)
9. **ROBBIE PEDEN**
Australia 25-3 (14)
10. **JANOS NAGY**
Hungary 23-0 (14)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 30-1 (16)
2. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
North Korea 32-3-1 (8)
3. **LUIS PEREZ**
Nicaragua 23-1 (15)
4. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 32-1-1 (24)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 28-2 (26)
6. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 29-4 (19)
7. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
South Africa 27-3 (18)
8. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 23-2 (10)
9. **GERRY PENALOSA**
Philippines 49-5-2 (33)
10. **MBWANA MATUMLA**
Tanzania 15-1 (9)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 60-2 (31)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
Venezuela 27-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 25-0 (20)
4. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 43-3-1 (33)
5. **IRENE PACHECO**
Colombia 30-1 (23)
6. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 19-0-2 (13)
7. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
Nicaragua 37-2-2 (24)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 19-1 (7)
9. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 24-3-1 (10)
10. **VICTOR BURGOS**
Mexico 38-14-3 (22)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
Panama 21-1 (17)
2. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 22-3-1 (16)
3. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 22-2-2 (13)
4. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 20-1 (15)
5. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 19-0 (12)
6. **WILL GRIGSBY**
St. Paul, MN 18-4-1 (11)
7. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 33-4-1 (20)
8. **NABUAKI MASUDA**
Japan 21-3 (3)
9. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico 22-5 (12)
10. **MUVHUSO NEDZANNI**
South Africa 14-1-3 (9)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **IVAN CALDERON**
Puerto Rico 25-0 (5)
2. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
Japan 20-1-3 (8)
3. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 50-7-4 (22)
4. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 15-1 (6)
5. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 15-2 (7)
6. **JUAN LANDAETA**
Venezuela 19-3-1 (16)
7. **OMAR SOTO**
Mexico 14-2-1 (10)
8. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 35-4-1 (30)
9. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 22-0 (17)
10. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
Mexico 24-8-3 (13)

By Jeff Ryan

Flash Flood

The late, great sportswriter Dick Young was a real character. As well as a guy who ducked controversy the way John Ruiz ducks right hands. (Though he wasn't even on the boxing beat full-time, Young managed to get himself forcibly removed from a Larry Holmes training session, provoke Don King to the point where the promoter had to be physically restrained, and engage in a nasty shouting match with a TV reporter who was trying to file a live report during a press conference—all in the same year.) Young was a heck of a writer, though, and my favorite columns of his were the ones he filled with his insights on random news items. He always entitled them, "What's Going On Here?"

That recipe of Young's column seems like a good one to follow this month, when there's plenty going on *here* in the world of boxing.

News Flash! Shane Mosley kayos Fernando Vargas: Forgive me if this shootout didn't make my skin all tingly, but for me it wasn't a clash of stars. Instead, it was the Hype Bowl, a pairing of two of the most overrated and undeserving fighters of the past decade.

Because they started their careers looking all sequined, spit-shined, and assassin-like, the boxing press fell in love with Mosley and Vargas as though they were a couple of dessert items at a press room buffet. When Mosley's record stood at 30-0 (28), and he was the IBF's 135-pound titlist in 1999, *Sport* magazine went so far as to state, "Sugar just may be the greatest lightweight of all-time." (Presumably, the writer of that piece was drug-tested immediately after he filed.) Meanwhile, in some of the crazier Vargas stories, "Ferocious" was labeled another Oscar De La Hoya.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Neither Vargas nor Mosley impressed Ryan

By the time they met in February, of course, Mosley and Vargas had six defeats between them. Unfortunately for Mosley, he ran into two guys who had him completely figured out: Vernon Forrest and Winky Wright. And Vargas fell to the two best opponents he'd encountered, De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad, and been given a points win over Wright that he didn't deserve.

So why all the hype? How did the press misread two guys so completely? The problem is that too many of today's writers overrate athletes because they were too young to have covered a Babe Ruth, Jim Brown, Rod Laver, or Wilt Chamberlain. So they are overly generous with their benefits of the doubt, oh so hungry to

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

No soft touches for middleweight champion Taylor

experience greatness right here in *their* era. (If there's no greatness, then, by golly, they'll use their stories to create some.) That's why the baseball press fawns all over Derek Jeter like he's Joe DiMaggio and football writers were willing to label the Baltimore Ravens' defense the best ever after one Super Bowl win, never mind that Pittsburgh's "Steel Curtain" won four.

Remember when boxing writers wanted another Sugar Ray Leonard so badly that they overlooked the limitations of Mark Breland and pumped him up like a Macy's balloon on Thanksgiving Day? It's not that our heroes go on to reveal feet of clay, but that too many clay pigeons shouldn't have become the media's heroes in the first place.

News Flash! Jermain Taylor-Winky Wright is a go: Overshadowed by the difficulty in getting this deal made and Wright's firing, and subsequent rehiring, of his promoter, Gary Shaw, is the message Taylor and his brain trust, Lou DiBella, are sending to anyone who's paying attention. Team Taylor is not just trying to construct an impressive resume, but doing so with the speed of an Indy 500 pit crew wired on 10 pots of coffee.

Though Taylor didn't deserve the decision over Bernard Hopkins in their first meeting and hardly impressed in winning the rematch, the champion's record does show two wins over a guy who was considered the sport's very best when Taylor first met him. Now, instead of following Hopkins I and II with a softie, Taylor is defending against Wright, currently number two on the pound-for-pound hit parade.

Taylor's ability, and performance on his two biggest nights, doesn't remind anyone of a Leonard, Hagler, Hearns, or Duran. But his method of filling his date book certainly does. He's taking on the toughest competition right from the beginning of his reign and doing something that is virtually unheard of these days: fighting marquee stars in back-to-back bouts.

Taylor and DiBella earned a huge measure of my respect just for looking in Wright's direction. If the champion actually beats Wright, who would be next? You get the feeling that if Floyd Mayweather, Ricky Hatton, and Marco Antonio Barrera were middleweights, one of them would be.

News Flash! Tommy Morrison plans a comeback: "The Duke" says he'll file a discrimination lawsuit against the Nevada State Athletic Commission, which has refused to license the HIV-positive powerhitter. That's just what boxing and the heavyweight division need: more litigation and a 37-year-old who hasn't competed in nearly a decade.

Flood this magazine's mailbox with nasty letters that hammer away at my political incorrectness, if you'd like, but you're not going to get me to take Morrison's side on this issue. It would be incredibly irresponsible for any athletic commission to license an HIV-positive fighter in a blood sport like boxing. A recent newspaper article that crossed my desk detailed the story of a rescue worker who contracted HIV when the abrasions on his hand came in contact with the blood of a car accident victim. Could something similar happen if Morrison bled into the open wound of an opponent?

Let's not find out. Boxing needs this worry about as much as Reese Witherspoon needs a chin implant.

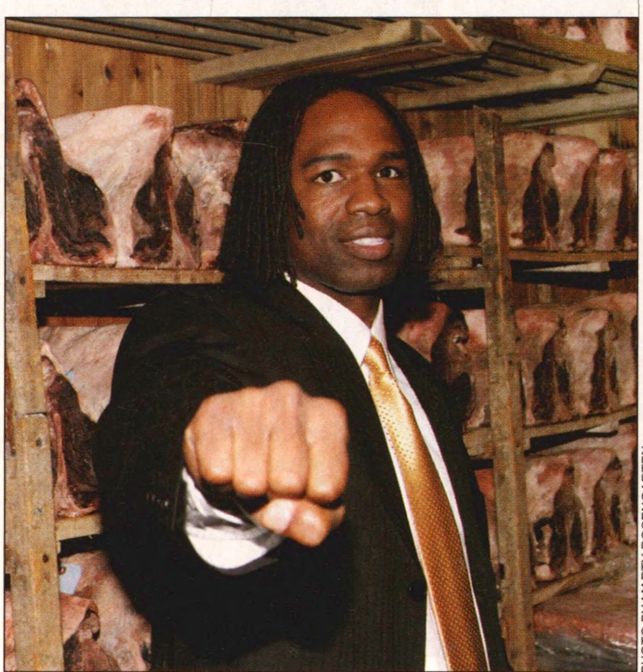


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

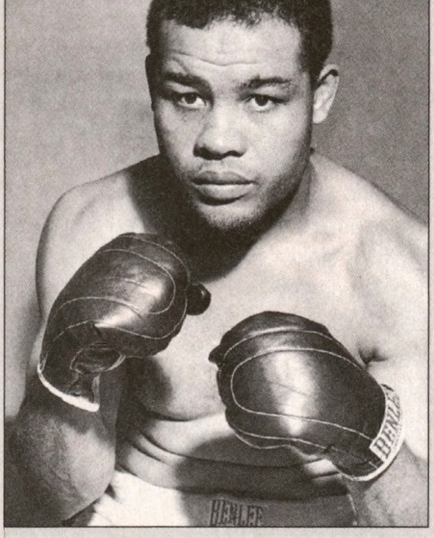
Byrd helped attract a capacity crowd in Germany

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from celluloid to cellulite:

•Bet you can't wait until Christmas Day, when *Rocky VI* opens at a theater near you. All of Hollywood is abuzz over a couple of scenes. In one, Rocky Balboa reportedly goes berserk after a low blow dislodges his Depend pad during a heated battle. And in the other, a distressed "Italian Stallion" repeats the famous "Cut me, Mick, cut me" line he uttered to his trainer in the original film. This time, The Rock is speaking to Dr. Mick N. Tuck, the plastic surgeon who's performing his facelift.

•Terrence Howard playing Joe Louis, with Spike Lee directing. Now *that's* the fight flick that has me looking forward to its release.



Actor Terrence Howard will play Louis (pictured) in new movie

•The theater lights are flickering, the long intermission is over, and we're returning to our seats. The big star is back on the big stage. The question is, in this final act of his Hall of Fame career, what exactly is De La Hoya hoping to accomplish?

•Had *Sport* not eventually gone out of business, the magazine would probably be telling us that Jermain Taylor is already better than Carlos Monzon.

•For the longest time after Mike Tyson made it clear to everyone that he was on the downside, we boxing scribes wondered why the public kept buying his fights, keeping his career on the respirator, and holding out hope that he'd somehow become a force again. Now we know. All of those ticket-buyers and pay-per-view customers no doubt feared a day when the likes of Byrd, Rahman, and Toney would be jockeying for position at the top of the heavyweight division and someone like Nicolay Valuev would be wearing an alphabet strap.

•Wasn't Hopkins supposed to retire *before* his 41st birthday in January?

•It was a little disconcerting seeing HBO's blow-by-blow man, Jim Lampley, working the Winter Olympics for NBC in February. At one point, you expected him to ask analyst Dick Button if he thought Sasha Cohen should have used her jab more. Perhaps we now have to worry about Lamps asking Larry Merchant if Manny Pacquiao should attempt a triple Salchow.

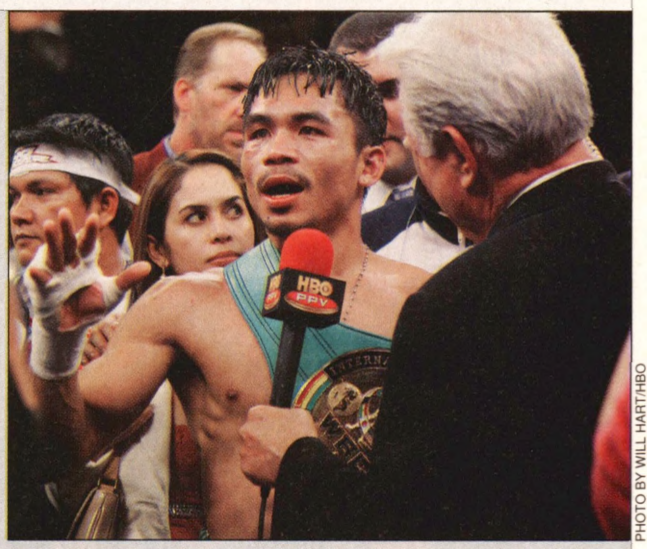


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Manny says, "Barrera yes; Salchow no"

•Speaking of figure skaters, have you seen what Tonya Harding, the one-time Laila Ali-wannabe, looks like these days? Geez, she'd more inflated than the itemized list of expenses Don King hands his fighters at the end of training camp. When Harding gets dental X-rays and wears that protective shield over her upper body, is she considered a lead zeppelin?

News Flash! Chris Byrd-Wladimir Klitschko is a scalper's dream fight: France's love affair with Jerry Lewis and British hooligans worked into a bottle-throwing, stampeding froth by a scoreless soccer match, should be proof enough that Europeans have, *uh,* unusual tastes. But now comes word that the Byrd-Klitschko IBF heavyweight title rematch sold out in two days in Mannheim, Germany. That's right, all 14,000 seats at SAP Arena were gone in 48 hours.

Two thoughts come to mind. First, SAP Arena might be the first venue ever named after the boxing ticket-buyer. And, second, if that sequel were planned for American soil, it would probably sell 48 tickets in 14,000 hours.

News Flash! Bernard Hopkins schedules his farewell: The good news is that "The Executioner" has finally decided to hang up his scowl, exit the game with his brain cells still functioning properly, and not hang around trashing his reputation ala Duran, Julio Cesar Chavez, and so many others. The bad news is that the opponent for Hopkins' alleged finale is light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver.

If Hopkins is defeated in their June showdown, there's no doubt in my mind that he'll pack it in. If he wins, however, there's about as much chance of "B-Hop" making a retirement speech as there is Keith Richards doing a skin care commercial. Imagine a new crown in a new division

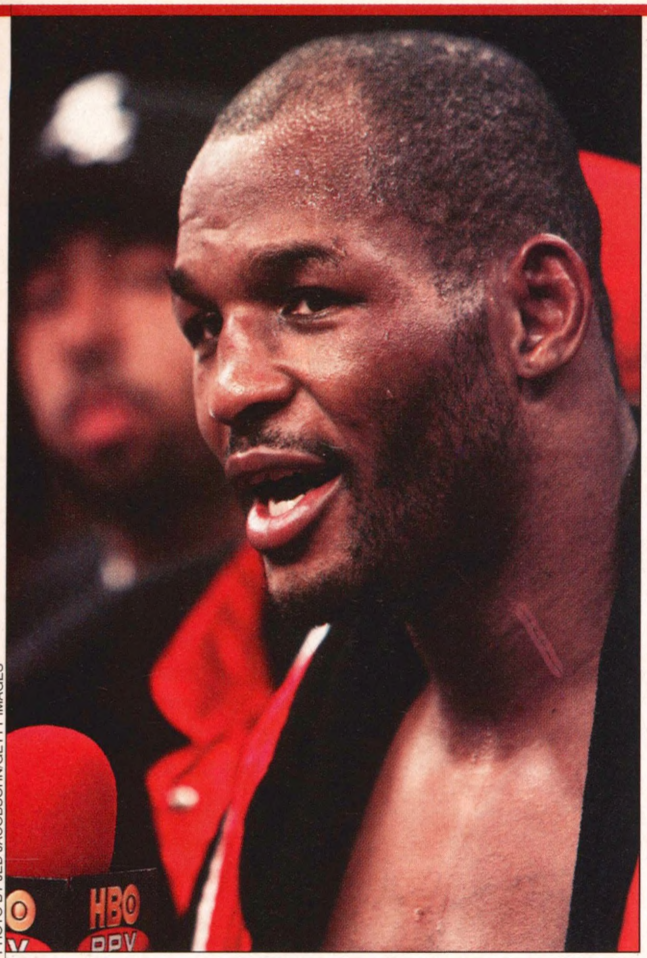


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

No way Hopkins retires if he beats Tarver

and a chance to make a lucrative defense or two? (A Tarver rematch. Glen Johnson. Or, finally, that Roy Jones sequel.) How is Hopkins going to pass up the temptation?

The safer route for Hopkins to take, and the one that would make me believe that he's truly committed to walking through the exit would be a farewell 10-rounder against some palooka at The Executioner's hometown Blue Horizon for a purse of a few grand. For the fight game's ultimate blue-collar warrior, nothing could be more fitting.

News Flash! Muhammad Ali's health continues to decline: Though reports of Ali's imminent death were greatly exaggerated a few months ago, a recent edition of the *New York Post* showed a sad photo of "The Greatest" moving about Manhattan with the aid of an aluminum walker.

Though we should be used to Ali the infirmed by now, photos or film clips of him looking like a feeble senior citizen are still hard for me to take. Sure, Ali should have been the fight game's goodwill ambassador and prime spokesman at this stage of his life. What I feel cheated out of, though, is the repertoire of attention-stealing antics he no doubt would have either perfected, reinvented, or run into the ground by now.

We should have been allowed to experience Ali being restrained as he playfully tries to attack James Toney and Hasim Rahman during the celebrity intros prior to their battle, the ex-champ jumping out of his seat and breaking into the "Ali Shuffle" without warning during a visit with Leno or Letterman, Ali complaining about bigoted software on the day the DVD of his computer bout with Rocky Marciano was released, Ali delivering a passionate speech at the opening of the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Kentucky, Ali dropping by the HBO and Showtime broadcast tables to provide a few rounds of guest commentary, Ali writing another autobiography, Ali speaking at length about where his relationship with Joe Frazier *really* stands these days, and more.

News Flash! HBO promises better fights: The network's plan in 2006 is to offer higher quality non-pay-per-view bouts, for example, Rahman-Toney and Taylor-Wright. And that's great. The problem with HBO Pay-Per-View in recent years was twofold. First, just about every telecast cost 45-to-50 bucks, not exactly pocket change in most households and an absolute fortune to an adolescent boxing fan that has to talk his parents into letting him place an order. Second, while it used to be great public demand that determined a bout was worthy of airing on pay-per-view, that isn't always the case anymore. Mosley-Vargas was an example of the tail wagging the dog. The fighters, promoters, and network hoped that the mere act of putting the matchup on HBO PPV would give it a certain cachet and make it a more appealing attraction.

It took long enough, but the "Network Of Champions" has realized that its audience isn't a patchwork of chumps with an endless supply of disposable income. ■

PHOTO BY ARNALDO MAGNANI/GETTY IMAGES

Ali has a new and disturbing kind of shuffle

By Ivan Goldman

Hopkins-Tarver: Snore-A-Thon In The Making

Antonio Tarver is taking a big chance getting in the ring with Bernard Hopkins. Hopkins could raise the level of tedium so high the judges will fall asleep. What's the ruling then? No-contest? Or, perish the thought, it could even set up a mandatory rematch.

As Hopkins prepares yet another con job, it's past time to ask how many times a fighter must stink out a joint before we realize his fights stink. Even when Hopkins kayoed the much smaller Oscar De La Hoya in 2004, he didn't get aggressive until the middle rounds.

Yet many of us will tell our heads to pipe down while we buy the fight with our hearts. We'll hope "The Executioner" wages such a clever strategy that we'll be in suspense throughout. We'll also wonder whether Tarver can catch Hopkins with the same kind of shot that starched Roy Jones in the second round of their second outing. Along with Hopkins' status as an icon, it's the threat of that one big punch from Tarver that will corral the pay-per-view dollars.

Had Hopkins-Jones II gone forth, it would have made golf look like Hagler-Hearns. But like so many potential

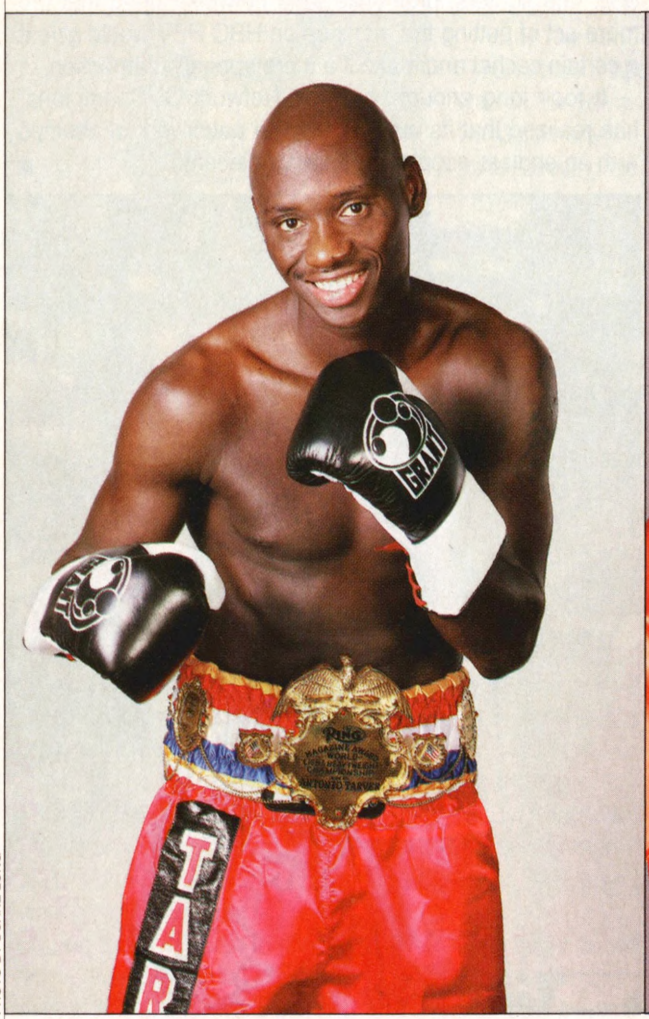


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

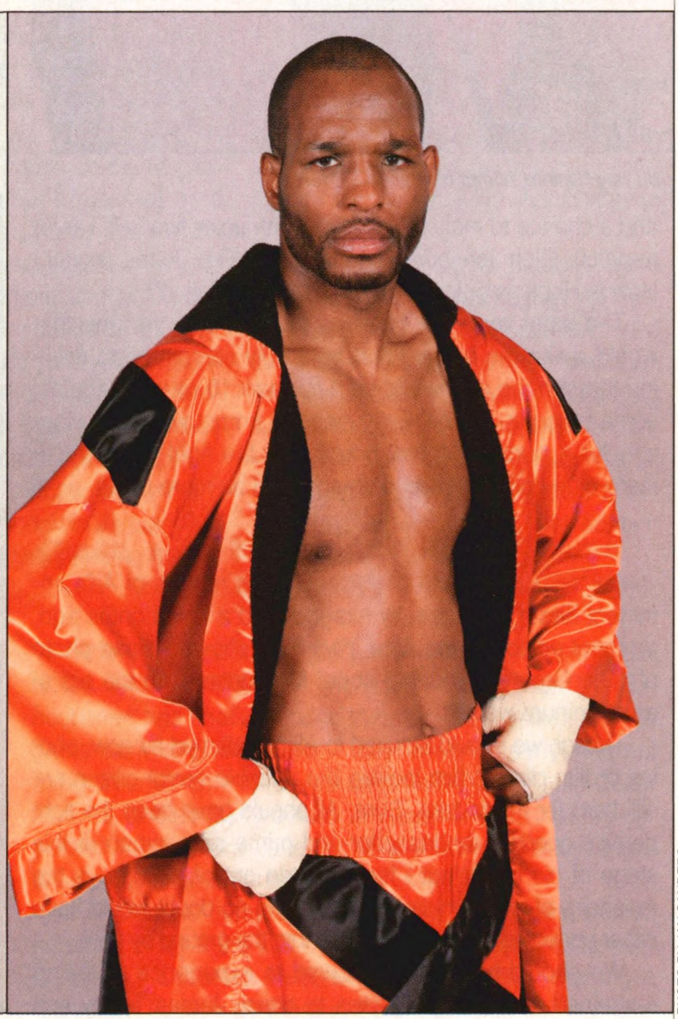


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Who wants to see Tarver (left) and Hopkins (right) pay-to-pose?

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Hopkins had to be encouraged by the borefest of Tarver-Jones III

fights involving Jones or Hopkins, it was dead on arrival. Instead Hopkins, who usually weighs in at less than the 160-pound middleweight limit, will, on June 10, face Tarver, a light heavy who's built more like a cruiserweight.

Yet it's not hard to see why Hopkins might agree to this spectacle. Tarver, though dangerous, has been known to do lots of waiting and watching, a tactic that's right up Bernard's alley. Hopkins had to be encouraged by Jones-Tarver III, in which Jones managed to prevent a fight from breaking out for 12 rounds.

I've heard trainers lecture their fighters that they need to throw more feints. But Hopkins doesn't need the lecture. He's learned the feinting lesson so well, he barely throws any punches. Against Taylor he'll also step aside, step back, clinch, get dirty, and step back some more, making the bout an echo of his two close, boring outings against Jermain Taylor.

This last-gasp match between geezer Hopkins, 41, and semi-geezer Tarver, 37, is not as unusual as it ought to be. Whether they were contenders or clubfighters, most fighters don't end their careers with a bang. Instead they fizzle out like wet fireworks. The great Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson had, in their last collection of contests, deteriorated to clubfight levels. Such melancholy spectacles fought by cash-strapped former greats bear an uncomfortable resemblance to Rod Serling's tragic, gripping *Requiem For A Heavyweight.* You almost expect to see Jackie Gleason emerge and hand out wrestling capes.

But unlike Louis and Robinson, Hopkins will earn a seven-figure purse. Stand in his boxing shoes and you can see how it might be hard for him to turn that down. He didn't exactly grow up with a governess and a chauffer, and he's known for squeezing nickels into a grayish powder. He figures to take advantage of those fans who feel compelled to watch the careers of splendid fighters all the way to the finish. Also, it's not always easy to surrender a hard-earned spotlight.

Sometimes geriatric fighters pull out a surprise, as Roberto Duran did when, in RING's 1989 Fight of the Year, he knocked down tough, much larger Iran Barkley and pounded out a stupendous victory. But boxing isn't like baseball, where old players might safely hang around trying to hit some statistical watermark that has nothing to do with playing well. Fighters don't play and their sport is not a game. If commissions won't prevent these geezer contests, the fans can, by simply refusing to watch.

As for me I expect I'll shell out the cash like everyone else. This sport has been through so many trials that all the hardcore pessimists were weeded out long ago.

Alphabet Dues: Titles are getting to be like steroid use in track-and-field. They started small and spread like typhoid. We may soon see disc jockeys giving away boxing titles to every fourth caller. Don't be surprised if they're offered to K-Mart shoppers. Minor-league ball clubs may declare title belt days and hand them out at the gate.

But the high crimes and misdemeanors committed by alphabet gangs go beyond their cheapening the concept of titles. Even the kleptomaniacal sanctioning fees they extract from fighters aren't their worst infraction. They actually do more enduring damage with their imposition of dues and their unconventional conventions.

Any officials failing to pay dues—I don't mean figurative dues; I mean actual cash dues—can't be approved by whichever alphabet gang is sucking the juices out of a given contest. Referees and judges either kick the proper amount of scratch into the kitty or they never get out of Peoria.

I know plenty of good, honest officials who will talk straight about anything else. But as soon as I refer to the dues they have to pony up to the gangs, they dummy up, fearing retribution.

When referees sew those emblems on their shirts, they fly the colors of their gang of choice. The alphabets are jealous masters. So when officials pay dues to one gang, they're generally not welcome at another. That makes being an official pretty much like living in a neighborhood where, in order to survive, even honor students get pulled into a street gang.

Directly linked to those dues are the annual alphabet conventions. Officials are heavily pressured to attend them at their own expense. Promoters admit they subsidize these conventions that are bazaars for promoters and managers seeking to boost their fighters in the rankings. The subsidies assist the gang chieftains in their determined effort never to reach into their own pockets. In little informal sessions going on all around, handlers and fighters make their spiel as though auditioning for a play, except actors don't pay producers for an audition.

Veteran ref Joe Cortez has paid his dues

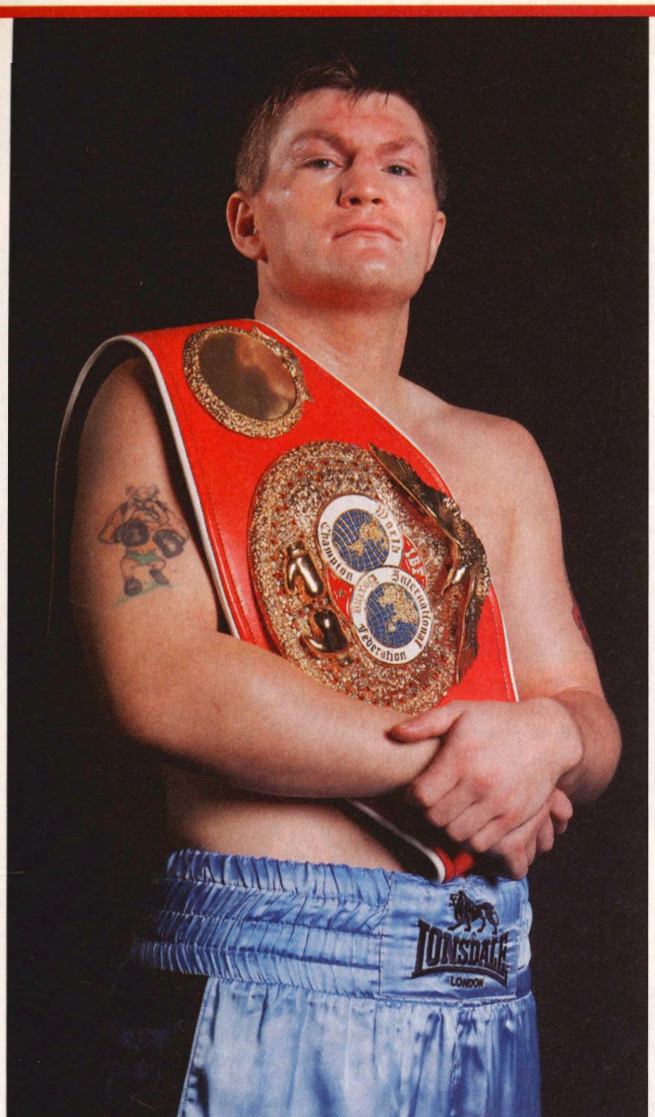
Scale Watch: It's impossible not to admire Ricky Hatton. He defied his British promoter to get at the big fights, then left his Manchester cocoon to take on the best in America. And he's going to ride that glory train as far as it will take him—Madison Square Garden, the Las Vegas Strip—get ready for one tough Brit.

But what was that we spotted when he was guest moderator (stealing the show incidentally) on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*? A double chin! Hatton should heed the lesson of the great champion he defeated—Kostya Tszyu (who may or may not be retired). Tszyu, though known for his strict gym regimen, actually balloons up between fights, throwing who knows what and how much of it on the barbie.

When it comes to discipline, Hatton should behave less like Tszyu and more like Hopkins, who gains all of four or five pounds between contests.

Et Tu, Ricky: Showtime spent years building Hatton into an attraction in the U.S. But as soon as he reached superstar status, he took his act down the street to HBO, whose fatter treasury allows it to outbid Showtime anytime it wants.

Magoo: Did those bozos on the Tennessee commission think they could get away with awarding a kayo victory to a fighter who bumped his opponent out of the



Hatton was pushing maximum chins during his ESPN2* Friday Night Fights *appearance

ring with his shoulder? Come to think of it, they did get away with it. But they won't get away without a Magoo.

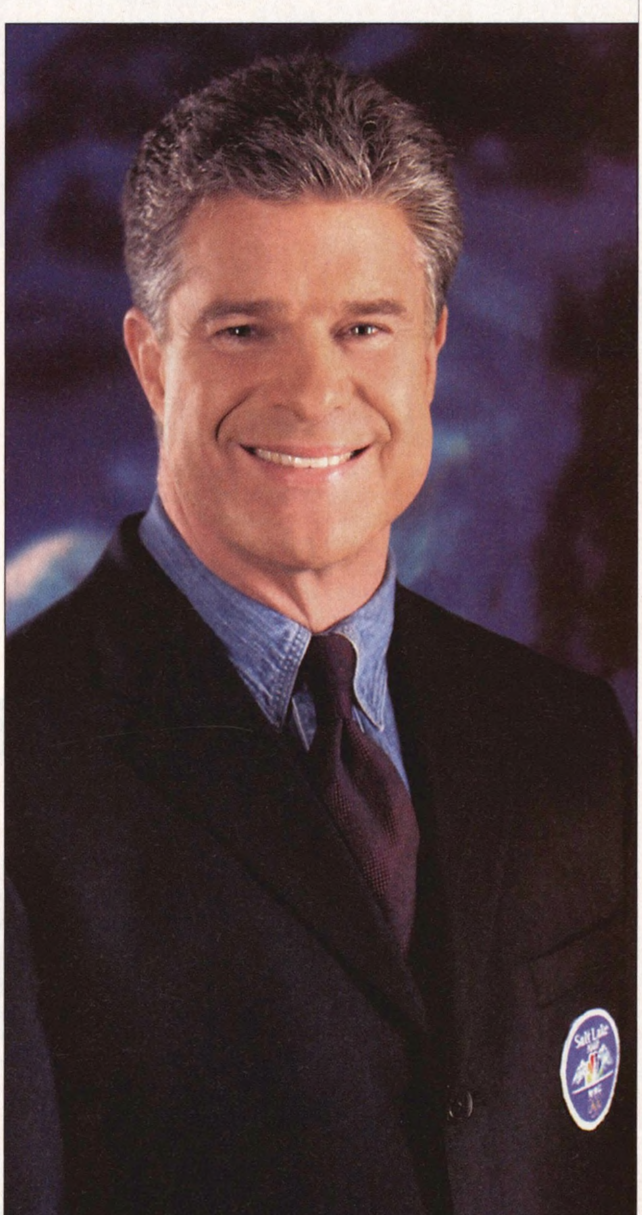
If you saw it on ESPN2, you know exactly what I'm talking about, because it was unforgettable. Long before they touched gloves to start the contest, it was a foregone conclusion that heavyweight prospect Alonzo Butler, 21-1-1 (16), would stop journeyman flee-monger Terry Porter, 15-18-3 (9), an obliging opponent who fares badly against cruisers or heavies, take your pick. Butler outweighed him by 56 pounds.

Being chosen as an opponent for Butler is an exclusive honor that goes only to individuals capable of breathing in and out before the opening bell. His last five opponents had a combined record of 47-44, and things get worse as you go further back. John Moore was 11-53-2 (1). John Basil Jackson was 4-72 (0). Who, you might ask, approved those contests? Surprise! The Tennessee commission.

Anyway, back to Porter. In the third round, of course losing, he turned his back and ran across the ring. Maybe he saw a white handkerchief over there he wanted to wave at Butler. Anyway, ex-footballer Butler chased him and threw a sort of a punch that didn't touch his escapee opponent. But his shoulder slammed Porter through the ropes to a safe haven on a table. There Porter remained until he could get someone to cut off the gloves so he could go collect his purse.

When a preordained kayo doesn't transpire, the presiding commission is supposed to have at least enough integrity to recognize it. That was a no-contest if there ever was one — but not in the record books.

Incidentally, Butler—aside from a record that's been carefully constructed out of tissue paper—is about as quick as that dead guy one of the alphabet gangs once moved up in its rankings—and I mean after he was dead. Unless Butler is bitten by the same radioactive beetle that sank its teeth into Spiderman, he should hang on to his day job. If he doesn't have one, he better get one. ■



HBO's Lampley will call Hatton's fights after Showtime built the Brit

[Camera Clicks]

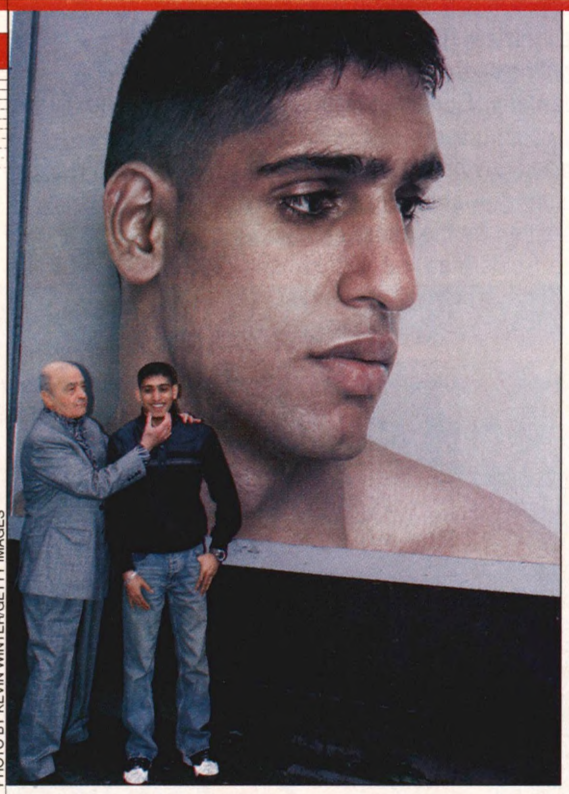


PHOTO BY KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

We hate to say it, but it looks like Amir Khan is starting to get a big head. With his face blown up about 10 feet tall, British mega-prospect Khan posed with Harrods owner Mohamed Al-Fayed for the launch of the department store's new advertising campaign, which features Khan along with other so-called "modern media icons" Billie Piper, Ray Winstone, Keeley Hawes, and Bear Grylls. (These are "modern media icons"? Aren't "icons" supposed to be people we've heard of? There are more famous people living in Don King's hair than there are on that list.)

PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Hans and Frans, meet your long-lost cousin Zsolt Erdei. The Germany-based Hungarian light heavyweight is here to pump ... you up! And he's here to do it in the ideal workout clothes, a nice, white shirt and jeans. We'd better stop right there with poking fun at Erdei—otherwise, he might start calling us "girly men."

PHOTO BY GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES

Is this the heavyweight prospect Golden Boy Promotions has been waiting for? Oscar De La Hoya knows a thing or two about busses (remember, he had his face painted across the side of one prior to his fight against Patrick Charpentier in El Paso several years back), but there's no bus in the world more people are climbing aboard right now than Super Bowl champion Jerome "The Bus" Bettis. De La Hoya and Bettis met up at the February fight between Shane Mosley and Fernando Vargas—appropriate since Vargas' eye was nearly the size of Bettis by night's end.

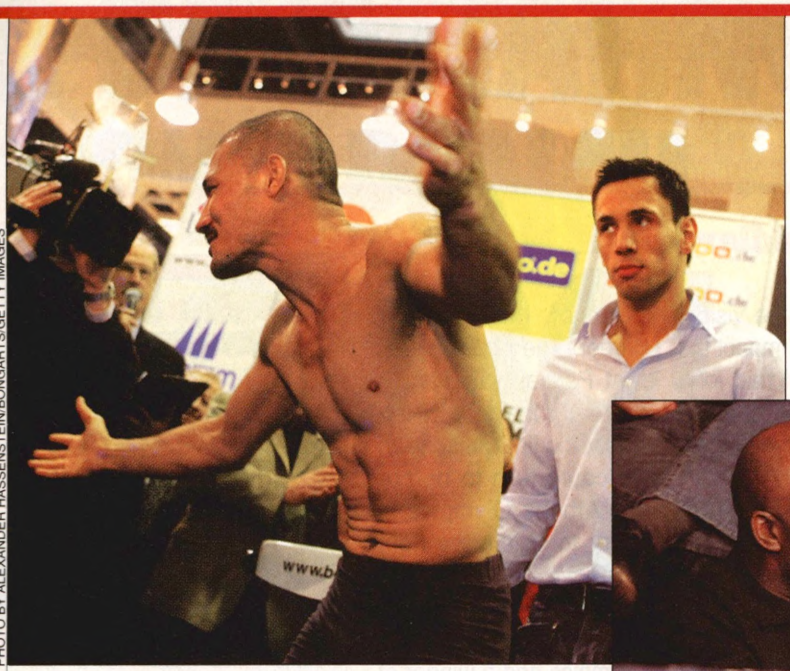


PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

What better place than Hamburg to ham it up for the cameras? In the German city for his March fight with Felix Sturm, middleweight Maselino Masoe had some fun with the press at the weigh-in, flexing, posing, and gesturing for the assembled media. Of course, boxing isn't about flexing, posing, or gesturing; it's about fighting, and Masoe didn't do that especially well in dropping a unanimous decision to Sturm the following evening.

Relax, Jake—it's a boxing arena, not a library. Apparently, Baby Jake Matlala and his wife, Mapule, thought they had to be vewwy, vewwy quiet at a recent fight card in Johannesburg, South Africa—either that, or this is the hand signal people make when Silence Mabuza enters the room. It's good to see Matlala, one of the best sub-4'11" fighters ever, looking well at age 44, four years into his retirement from boxing.

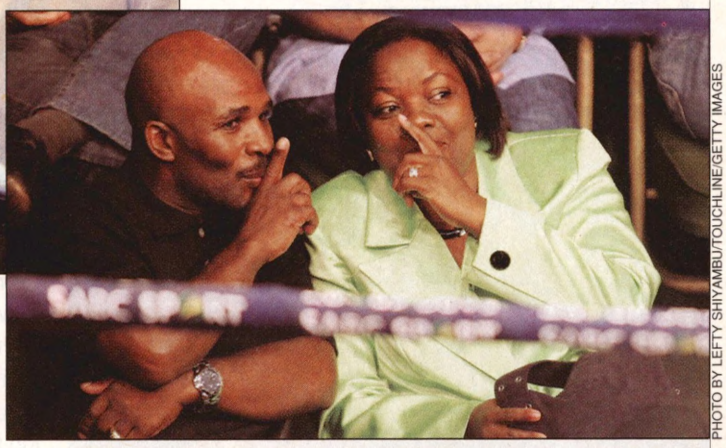


PHOTO BY LEFTY SHIVAMBU/TOUCHLINE/GETTY IMAGES

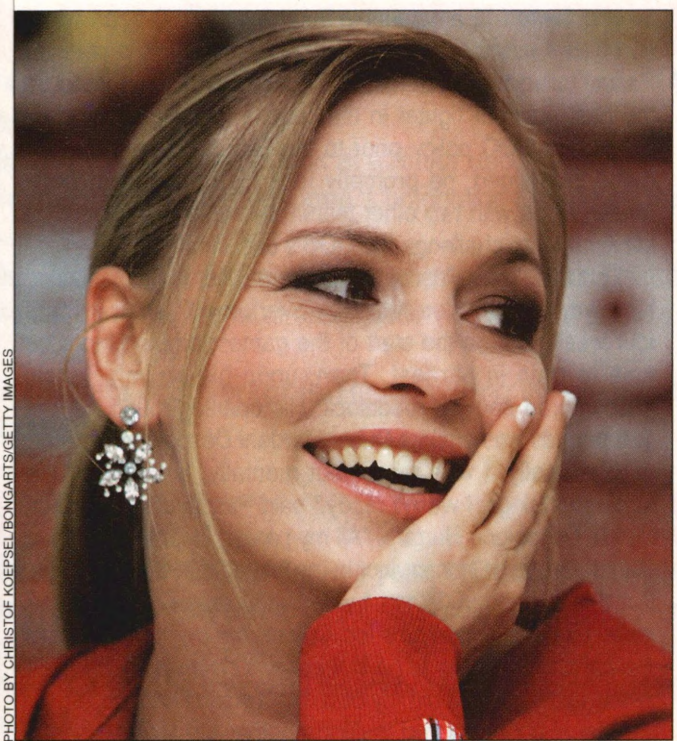
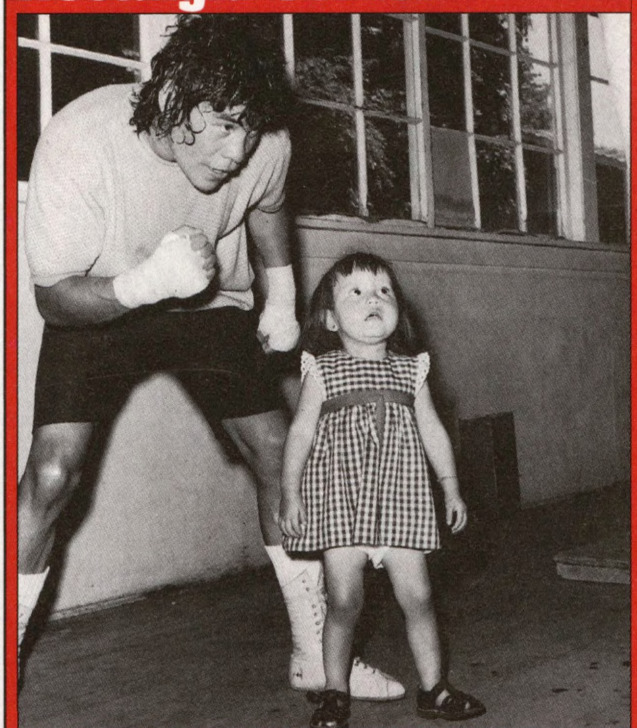


PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Here's a pleasant reminder that not all boxers look like Nicolay Valuev. The easy-on-the-eyes Regina Halmich, a German flyweight with an easy-on-the-eyes 49-1-1 (15) record, flashes a smile at a press conference announcing her May fight with Viktoria Milo. Let's just hope Regina doesn't wear those earrings into the ring.

Nostalgia Corner



Avoiding gym wars can be the smart thing for a veteran slugger such as Ruben Olivares, but squaring off with a two-year-old is taking things a bit too far, don't you think? Actually, this gag shot of Olivares and his daughter, Aricia, was taken while Ruben was prepping for his 1974 bout with Zensuke Utagawa, who the Mexican kayoed in the seventh round. Some still claim Utagawa lost because he left his fight in the gym sparring his five-year-old son.

By Paul Salgado

Jean Pascal Super Middleweight

Big dreams are not enough. If you have the vision, you have to be bold and act decisively to impact the challenges in front of you. Jean Pascal had long internalized this essential truth as a seven-time Canadian national champion, and it carried him through to the biggest fight of his amateur career. The problem was that Pascal was waging that fight inside a courtroom, the final jurisdiction he could turn to before the Athens Olympics in order to obtain the right to represent his country.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GYM

Pro Record

2005		
Feb. 3	Justin Hahn, Montreal, Quebec	KO 2
Feb. 12	Jesse Londo, Montreal	KO 1
March 3	Eddie O'Neal, Montreal	W 4
June 18	Donnie Penelton, Montreal	KO 2
July 13	Homer Gibbins, Montreal	KO 2
Sept. 10	Ricardo Kellman, Montreal	KO 2
Oct. 15	Jesse Sanders, Montreal	KO 1
Oct. 29	James Crawford, Gatineau, Quebec	KO 3
Nov. 19	Gerardo Soria, Sherbrooke, Quebec	KO 4
Dec. 10	Martin Desjardins, Montreal	KO 7
2006		
Feb. 25	Eric Howard, Gatineau	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
11	11	0	0	10

A gold medalist at the 2002 Commonwealth Olympics and a winner of a world championship Olympic qualifying tournament the previous April in Brazil, Pascal was favored to medal at the Athens Games, but his home country was trying to prevent him from competing, based on a bizarre technicality. Despite meeting the International Olympic Committee standards, the more rigid Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) would not recognize the results of the qualifiers in Brazil and required that a boxer be ranked among the top 12 amateurs in their weight class to be sponsored as a member of the national Olympic team, a criterion Pascal failed to meet. Pascal, who was widely regarded as the best amateur fighter in the country, had not been notified of the COC policy prior to the Rio de Janeiro tournament. Blindsided, he promptly took his fight to the courthouse, along with two other teammates who had suffered a similar fate, to challenge the COC's decision.

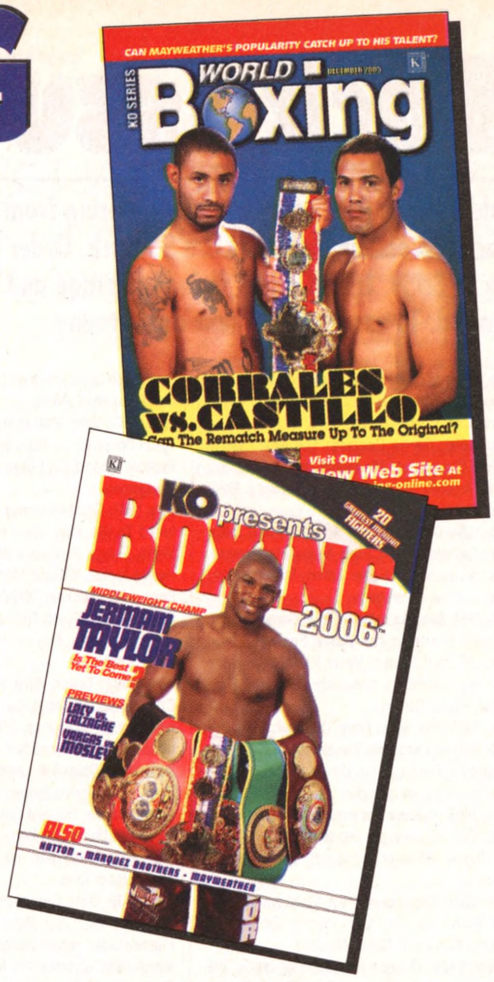
Fortunately for Pascal, his lawyers' killer instincts rivaled his own, and the decision was overturned, albeit a mere four weeks before the start of the games, offering him little time to train in earnest. Then, upon his arrival, Pascal encountered another roadblock: His opening-round bout at 165-pounds was against Cuban Jordani Despaigne Herrera.

"Physically, I was ready, but mentally, because of the COC and things, I wasn't ready," said Pascal of his decision loss to Despaigne Herrara. "All my career, I wanted to fight a Cuban, but to be honest, not in my first fight at the Olympics. But things happen. When I was in the arena I wasn't nervous. I said to myself. *It's the Cuban, but my name is Jean Pascal and I'm going to go in there and do my stuff and we'll see what happens.* I did my best, but it wasn't enough."

Pascal contemplated making another bid for gold at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, but felt he needed a new challenge. Turning professional, he concluded, was better suited to his fighting style and flashy personality, while the opportunity to

(Continued on page 120)

A DEVASTATING TWO-PUNCH COMBO!



SUBSCRIBE TO KO PRESENTS BOXING 2006 & WORLD BOXING

And save 42% off the newstand price!

KO PRESENTS BOXING 2006

KO PRESENTS BOXING 2006 (Three times a year, 140 pages) Includes ...

Showdown. A detailed look at a major upcoming fight.

Reading Between The Ropes. Contributing Editor Eric Raskin provides the story behind the story.

Hot Prospect. A profile of a rising fighter with star potential.

Media Review. A critical examination of the fight game's press coverage.

Superstars & Superfights. Remembering the greatest boxers of all-time.

WORLD BOXING

WORLD BOXING (Two times a year, 116 pages) Includes ...

Hitting On The Break. An outrageous column by controversial Jim Bagg.

Toe-To-Toe. The insightful views of our managing editor, Joe Santoliquito.

The Sweeter Science. Joe Santoliquito's in-depth look at the world of women's boxing.

The Predictor. Previews and odds on upcoming fights.

Report Card. Grading six different fighters in a new division each issue and forecasting their chances for future success.

SAVE NEARLY $18!

☐ World Boxing/Boxing 2006 (5 issues) for just $25.00 (LKOM/LWBX)

Send To: London Publishing Co., P.O. Box 2085, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8185

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to London Publishing Co.)

☐ VISA # _____

☐ MasterCard # _____

Expiration Date: ____ / ____ MO/YR

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. ____

City _____ State ____ Zip ____

☐ New Subscription ☐ Renewal

For Canada and all other countries: $30.00 for five issues combined of KO Presents Boxing 2006 and World Boxing ($40.00 airmail). International money orders only in U.S. funds only. Please allow up to eight weeks before you receive your first magazine. Offer expires January 31, 2007.

ACBM06

7434/1-06

Back Issues of

Add to your RING collection by ordering from our limited supply of back issues. Single issues are $5 each. Order by the year and save up to 30%. Listed prices include postage and handling. Supplies are limited. To assure fulfillment order today.

Feb. 1983: Michael Dokes: Tainted Champion? Plus: Howard Cosell, Ray Mancini, Bum of the Month Club, Chacon-Limon.

Nov. 1983: Gerrie Coetzee: The New Heavyweight Champ Sets His Sights On Holmes. Plus: Alexis Arguello, Murray Sutherland, James J. Braddock, Muhammad Ali.

Feb. 1984: Don King Talks And Talks And Talks. Plus: Leonard's return, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, 1983 quotes, Marvin Hagler, Johnny Bratton, Gerald Hayes, Hagler-Duran color.

July 1984: Bazooka's Aim Is True: Gomez Shoots Down LaPorte In The Battle For San Juan. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Tyrone Crawley, Leonard's comeback, Chandler-Sandoval, Hagler-Roldan.

Oct. 1984: The Beast From The East: John Mugabi Strikes Terror Into The Hearts Of Men. Plus: Olympics, Bill Costello, Davey Moore, Wilfred Benitez, King's heavyweights.

Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

March 1985: Thomas Hearns—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Annual ratings, Fight, Upset, Round, Comeback, and Prospect of the Year.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

June 1985: Holmes' Last Hurrah? Holmes-Bey Color Action. Plus: Holmes vs. all-time greats, Paul-Arroyo, 1901.

Aug. 1985: Seven Elected To The Ring Hall Of Fame (Jose Napoles, Jake LaMotta, Panama Al Brown, Manuel Ortiz, Young Stribling, Thomas Jackling, Lord Lonsdale). Plus: Spinks-Holmes preview, Barry McGuigan.

Oct. 1985: The "Macho Man" Rides Again. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Berbick-Green, John E. Garcia, Dwight Muhammad Qawi, McCallum-Braxton.

Nov. 1985: Will Hagler Feast On The Beast? Plus: Hagler-Mugabi & Hearns-Shuler previews, Lonnie Smith, Pintor-Meza, Chuck Hull, Benitez-Moley.

Dec. 1985: Michael Spinks: Against All Odds. Plus: Curry-McCrory preview, McGuigan-Taylor, Alexis Arguello, Michael Olajide, Chavez-Pratchett.

Jan. 1986: In Search Of A Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Arguello-Jefferson, Olympic update, Chicago boxing.

May 1986: Hagler vs. Mugabi: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Bramble-Crawley, Tyson-Ferguson, 10 worst decisions.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air Into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Evander Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new Ring ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn—Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Lockridge & Mayweather, Tony Burton, Julio Cesar Chavez, blood.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Feb. 1990: Mike Tyson: Riddick Bowe & Ray Mercer Take Aim. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Gerry Cooney, Chuck Wepner, Antonio Esparragoza, Roman-Laciar.

March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

April 1990: Pernell Whitaker: Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Tiger Flowers, Duran-Leonard, Chavez-Taylor preview, Jorge Paez, Ali-Cooper.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

June 1990: Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World. Plus: Michael Moorer, Camacho-Paez, Tommy Farr, excuses, Dick Tiger, Ruben Olivares-Jeff Chandler.

July 1990: "I'm Hungrier Than Ever Before," By Evander Holyfield. Plus: James Toney, Buddy McGirt, Glenwood Brown, Aaron Davis, Michael Carbajal, Jorge Paez, Kid Gavilan, Mark Breland, Ali-Liston II (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler—Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay! Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez. Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be ... But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What If He Had To Face These Guys? Plus: Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now*? Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, The Ring Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (mid-term report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up. Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

May 1995: The State Of The Game. Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

Jan. 1996: King Bruno! A Hero Always ... A Winner At Last. Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, Chris Eubank, Eddie Perkins, who's hot/who's not.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

Nov. 1996: Pole-Axed! Low Blows, Sinking Bowe, Ugly Show. Plus: Bowe-Golota I, Blinky Palermo, exciting fighters, Winky Wright, Joe Brown.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

Nov. 1997: Is Mike Tyson Finished? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, De La Hoya-Camacho preview, Frankie Conley, Hall of Fame, gloves,

Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

April 1998: Evander Holyfield: The Ring's Fighter Of The Year (Again!). Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.

July 1998: Holyfield ... Tapia ... Hamed ... Jones ... Trinidad ... De La Hoya: Who Will Be The First To Fall? Plus: Magic Johnson, Chavez-Gonzalez & Lopez-Alvarez, underappreciated boxers.

Aug. 1998: Lennox Lewis: No Holyfield, No Glory. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Pat & Mike McMurtry, Chris Byrd, unbreakable records, contenders & pretenders.

Sept. 1998 (92-Page Special): This Man's Not Unbeatable! Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle. Plus: John Tate, Freddie Norwood, Andrew Golota, Roy Jones, 12 greatest finishes.

Oct. 1998: Really Hard Punch ... Really Soft Lips: Oscar Makes Legs Quiver In And Out Of The Ring. Plus: Hector Camacho Jr., Mayweather-Hernandez preview, *Tuesday Night Fights*.

Jan. 1999: Sugar Shane Mosley: The Sweet Tradition Continues. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Ray "Windmill" White.

Feb. 1999: 1999! It's Gonna Be A Great Year For Boxing. Plus: Mike Tyson, Foreman-Holmes, David Reid, Eric Morel, Richie Mitchell, quitters.

March 1999: De La Hoya vs. Quartey: Does Bazooka Have The Weapons To Shoot Down Oscar? Plus: Sugar Shane Mosley, Lopez-Alvarez II, Roy Jones, Coley Wallace.

May 1999: Is It All Over For Tyson? Plus: Terry Norris, Vinny Pazienza, Jesus Pimental, stoppages, mandatories.

June 1999: The Fans Have Spoken: Results Of The Ring Readers' Poll. Plus: Michael Grant, De La Hoya-Quartey, Antwun Echols, Ted Lowry.

July 1999 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Holyfield-Lewis, Felix Trinidad, Stevie Johnston, Emile Griffith, Phil Zwick.

Aug. 1999: Candidates For Greatness: Can Anyone Fill The Heavyweight Void? Plus: Tim Austin, Naseem Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Max Schmeling, Holyfield-Lewis.

Sept. 1999: Taking Stock In The Fight Game: Who's Hot, Who's Not. Plus: Tony Ayala, Keith Holmes, Denny & Phil Moyer, scoring.

Dec. 1999: Insiders' Analysis: Can Roy Jones Chop Down The Best Heavyweights? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, David Reid, David Tua, Carmen Basilio, Johnny Summerlin.

Holiday 1999 (92-Page Special): Heavyweight Showdowns! Holyfield vs. Lewis II, Grant vs. Golota. Plus: Francois Botha, Arturo Gatti, Michael Carbajal, Rocky Marciano, Lou Filippo.

Jan. 2000: What Does Trinidad's Victory Over Oscar Mean? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Paul Spadafora, Ralph Dupas, boxing media.

March 2000: Lennox Lewis: The Champ For The Millennium ... Or Just For The Moment? Plus: Oleg Maskaev, Main Events, Derrick Jefferson, Jerry Buss, IBF scandal.

May 2000: Lennox Lewis Will Quit ... Or Get Knocked Out, By Michael Grant. Plus: Roy Jones, Quartey-Vargas preview, Garth Panter, best chins, boxing movies.

June 2000: The Honors Keep Coming! Lenox Lewis Receives The Undisputed Ring Belt. Plus: Roy Jones, Vernon Forrest, Teddy Atlas, Mike Tyson, Don Fullmer.

July 2000 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Zab Judah, Oscar De La Hoya, Barrera-Morales, Ken Buchanan, Beau Jack, Eric Bottjer.

Aug. 2000: Hamed! And The Men Who Want To Kick His Naz! Plus: David Reid, James Prince, Anthony Fletcher, Micky Ward, final beatings, white hopes.

Sept. 2000: A New Look At Lennox Lewis: Is He An All-Time Great? Plus: Winky Wright, Michael Moorer, De La Hoya & Vargas, Eddie McGoorty.

Oct. 2000 (92-Page Special): Move Up Or Shut Up! We're Sick Of Roy Jones' Heavyweight Tease. Plus: Lennox Lewis, Tapia & Romero, Hasim Rahman, Dwight Qawi, Al Palzer, fight films, best refs.

(ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE DECEMBER 2000 ISSUE)

Dec. 2000: The Hell With Tyson—Tua Is The Man Who Could Beat Lewis. Plus: Mike Tyson, Felix Trinidad, Wladimir Klitschko, Trilla in Manila, U.S. vs. World, Toxey Hall.

Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: The Ring's Five-Step Recovery Plan. Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.

March 2001 (108-Page Extra): Tyson! Forget About Retirement ... A Title Shot Awaits! Plus: Ayala-Tapia II, Audley Harrison, Chris Byrd, Kirk Johnson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Boone Kirkman, 12 most exciting rounds.

April 2001: A New Beginning ... A New Middle: Felix Trinidad Is Ready To Conquer Another Division! Plus: Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis, Paul Andrews, boxing business.

May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.

June 2001: Pretty Boy Floyd: Superstar Or Superbrat? Plus: Lewis vs. greats, 2000 Olympians, Henry Hall, rematches we'd like to see.

July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.

Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing. Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights.*

Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Ring Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!" Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.

Oct. 2001: Trinidad vs. Hopkins: Middleweight Unification Superfight Analysis & Predictions. Plus: Emanuel Steward, Joe Calzaghe, Ali's opponents, Rahman & King.

Dec. 2001: The Rock Promises Another Shock! "I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!" Plus: David Reid, Jones-Gonzalez, McCline-Grant, Jackie Graves, ring deaths.

Jan. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Oscar Feeds His Critics: Did He Chicken Out Against Vargas? Plus: Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, 20 greatest featherweights, "Caveman" Bob Moha.

March 2002 (108-Page Extra): Is Tyson Ready To Regain The Title? Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Bernard Hopkins, Eddie Futch, fitness, ahead for 2002.

May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.

June 2002: Lennox Lewis: I'll End The Tyson "Freak Show!" Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Freitas-Casamayor, De La Hoya & Vargas, Hagler & Leonard.

July 2002 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Preview: The Oscar-Fernando Hatefest. Plus: Hopkins & Monzon, Francisco Bojado, Buddy McGirt, Lionel Rose, State of the Game.

Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next. Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.

Sept. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Vernon Forrest—Next Step In The Master Plan: End Mosley's Career. Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ricardo Mayorga, 20 greatest lightweights.

Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!" Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.

Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble? Plus: The Ring 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.

Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.

Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth? Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.

March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame. Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.

April 2003: Gatti Has His Ducks In A Row: A New Woman And A New Trainer Put The "Art" Back In Arturo. Also: Barrera-Morales, Roy Jones, Phillip Ndou & Silence Mabuza, Laila Ali, Gorilla Jones,

May 2003 (108-Page Extra): Ali ... Leonard ... Tyson ... Klitschko? Also: Year-end awards, Chris Byrd, Lupe Pintor, Maxie Rosenbloom.

June 2003: Exclusive! The Ring Grills George Foreman. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Ricardo Mayorga, Diego Corrales, Tommy Loughran.

July 2003 (108-Page Extra): Now What, Roy? How Jones Matches Up Against The Heavyweight Elite. Also: Mike Tyson, Marquez Brothers, Ricardo Williams, Tony Zale.

Aug. 2003: The Ring Unscrambles The Heavyweight Mess. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Scott Harrison, Billy Warren, Latino revolution, cups.

Sept. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Oscar At 30: Forget About Retirement ... He Has Revenge On His Mind. Also: Mayorga-Forrest II preview, James Toney, Barney Ross, HBO, report cards.

Oct. 2003: James Toney vs. Bernard Hopkins: The Ghost Of Superfights Past. Also: De La Hoya-Mosley II preview, Jermain Taylor, Sharmba Mitchell, biggest hearts.

Nov. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Healing And Hungry: Vitali Klitschko—Is He The Man To Retire Lewis? Also: Gatti-Ward III, Holyfield-Toney, Dominick Guinn, Lee Roy Murphy, The Ring 100.

Jan. 2004 (108-Page Extra): Shane-Oscar II: The 10 Questions You Want Answered! Also: Laila Ali, Mark Johnson, Jimmy McClarnin, The Ring championship, broke boxers, division-by-division analysis.

March 2004 (108-Page Extra): Audley Harrison, Dominick Guinn, Joe Mesi: Who Will Be The Next Star Heavyweight? Also: Floyd Mayweather, Arturo Gatti, Erik Morales, what's ahead for 2004.

April 2004: Antonio Tarver: "It's Not About Roy Jones Anymore." Also: Pacquiao-Barrera, Floyd Mayweather, all punch/no chin, Rinty Monaghan.

May 2004 (108-Page Extra): James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Also: Year-end awards, Mosley-Wright preview, King's "Night Of The Undisputed," boxing politicians.

June 2004: The Lewis Retirment: Will He Come Back? Also: Scott Pemberton, Jones-Tarver preview, James McGirt, James J. Braddock.

July 2004 (100-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Also: Erik Morales, Howard Eastman, Marco Antonio Barrera, Hank Hankinson, middleweights.

Summer 2004: Squeezed Out: Is There A Superfight For Felix Trinidad? Also: Joe Mesi, Miguel Cotto, Winky Wright, Ceferino Garcia.

Oct. 2004 (100-Page Extra): The Executioner: There's No Escape For De La Hoya! Also: Verno Phillips, Jose Luis Castillo, Felix Sturm, James Toney, Jeff Lacy, one-punch kayos

Fall 2004: Trinidad vs. Mayorga: Comeback Or Calamity. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Marco Antonio Barrera, Juan Diaz, Jimmy Clabby.

Dec. 2004 (100-Page Extra): The Ring 100. Also: Diego Corrales, Rafael Marquez, Williams-Tyson, Gatti-Mayweather preview, boxing and government.

Feb. 2005 (100-Page Extra): The Incredible Comeback Of Felix Trinidad—Just The Boost Boxing Needs! Also: Glen Johnson, Klitschko-Williams preview, Kasim Ouma, Tony Lopez, Paul Berlenbach, bodypunching.

Winter 2005: 1980s vs. Today: Comparing The Middleweight Superstars. Also: Roy Jones, Leija-Gatti preview, Terry Downes, comebacks.

April 2005 (100-Page Extra): How Kostya Tszyu Mastered The Sweet Science: The Metamorphosis Of A Near-Perfect Fighter. Also: Barrera-Morales III, Winky Wright, Vivian Harris, 10 greatest title reigns, 10 burning questions.

Spring 2005—Svelter Welter: Moving To 147 Will Tip The Scale In Oscar's Favor. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Glen Johnson, Andre Ward, Johnny Persol.

June 2005 (100-Page Extra): Tito vs. Winky: Is Trinidad Facing Hopkins-Like Danger? Also: Zab Judah, Ricky Hatton, Kassim Ouma, Marcel Thil & Eugene Criqui, all-star report cards.

Summer 2005: Gatti vs. Mayweather: Will This Be The Mismatch "Pretty Boy" Predicts? Also: Erik Morales, Miguel Cotto, Mahyar Monshipour, Pinky Silverberg.

August 2005 (100-Page Extra): *The Contender*: Boxing's Ticket Back To The Mainstream? Also: Jorge Acar, Hopkins vs. Jones, Riddick Bowe, Buster Douglas, The State of the Game.

October 2005 (100-Page Extra): Our Man Hatton—Working-Class Warrior Becomes A World-Class Superstar. Plus: Wright-Trinidad, Corrales-Castillo, Kingsley Ikeke, great career come-backs, featherweights.

☐ FEB/83
☐ NOV/83

☐ FEB/84
☐ JUL/84
☐ OCT/84
All 3 $14

☐ JAN/85
☐ FEB/85
☐ MAR/85
☐ MAY/85
☐ JUN/85
☐ AUG/85
☐ OCT/85
☐ NOV/85
☐ DEC/85
All 9 $34

☐ JAN/86
☐ MAY/86
☐ JUN/86
☐ AUG/86
☐ SEP/86
☐ DEC/86
All 6 $25

☐ JUN/87
☐ JUL/87
☐ SEP/87
☐ NOV/87
☐ DEC/87
All 5 $22

☐ JAN/88
☐ FEB/88
☐ MAR/88
☐ APR/88
☐ MAY/88
☐ SEP/88
☐ OCT/88
☐ NOV/88
All 8 $31

☐ JAN/89
☐ FEB/89
☐ MAR/89
☐ MAY/89
All 4 $18

☐ FEB/90
☐ MAR/90

☐ APR/90
☐ MAY/90
☐ JUN/90
☐ JUL/90
☐ SEP/90
☐ NOV/90
☐ DEC/90
All 9 $34

☐ APR/91
☐ JUN/91
☐ JUL/91
☐ AUG/91
All 4 $18

☐ JUL/92
☐ SEP/92
☐ NOV/92
All 3 $14

☐ FEB/93
☐ APR/93
☐ MAY/93
All 3 $14

☐ AUG/94
☐ DEC/94

☐ MAY/95

☐ JAN/96
☐ FEB/96
☐ NOV/96
All 3 $14

☐ JUN/97
☐ NOV/97

☐ FEB/98
☐ APR/98
☐ JUL/98
☐ AUG/98
☐ SEP/98
☐ OCT/98
All 6 $25

☐ JAN/99
☐ FEB/99
☐ MAR/99
☐ MAY/99
☐ JUN/99
☐ JUL/99
☐ AUG/99
☐ SEP/99

☐ DEC/99
☐ HOL/99
All 10 $37

☐ JAN/00
☐ MAR/00
☐ MAY/00
☐ JUN/00
☐ JUL/00
☐ AUG/00
☐ SEP/00
☐ OCT/00
☐ DEC/00
All 9 $34

☐ FEB/01
☐ MAR/01
☐ APR/01
☐ MAY/01
☐ JUN/01
☐ JUL/01
☐ AUG/01
☐ SEP/01
☐ OCT/01
☐ DEC/01
All 10 $37

☐ JAN/02
☐ MAR/02
☐ MAY/02
☐ JUN/02
☐ JUL/02
☐ AUG/02
☐ SEP/02
☐ OCT/02
☐ NOV/02
All 9 $34

☐ JAN/03
☐ FEB/03
☐ MAR/03
☐ APR/03
☐ MAY/03
☐ JUN/03
☐ JUL/03
☐ AUG/03
☐ SEP/03
☐ OCT/03
☐ NOV/03
All 11 $40

☐ JAN/04
☐ MAR/04

☐ APR/04
☐ MAY/04
☐ JUN/04
☐ JUL/04
☐ SUM/04
☐ OCT/04
☐ FALL/04
☐ DEC/04
All 10 $37

☐ FEB/05
☐ WIN/05
☐ APR/05
☐ SPR/05
☐ JUN/05
☐ SUM/05
☐ AUG/05
☐ OCT/05
All 8 $31

In case of sellout, indicate two substitute choices: _____ _____

Please send me the back issues I have checked off. I have enclosed $5 for each issue as payment in full or provided my credit card number to charge my purchase ($20 minimum). Send To:

LONDON PUBLISHING CO.
P.O. BOX 910
FT. WASHINGTON, PA 19034

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to London Publishing Co.)

☐ VISA # _____

☐ MasterCard # _____

Expiration Date: __/__ (MO/YR)

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

For all orders except the U.S., you must add $1.50 for every back issue to be sent via surface mail, and $3.00 for every back issue to be sent airmail. Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

7217/8-05

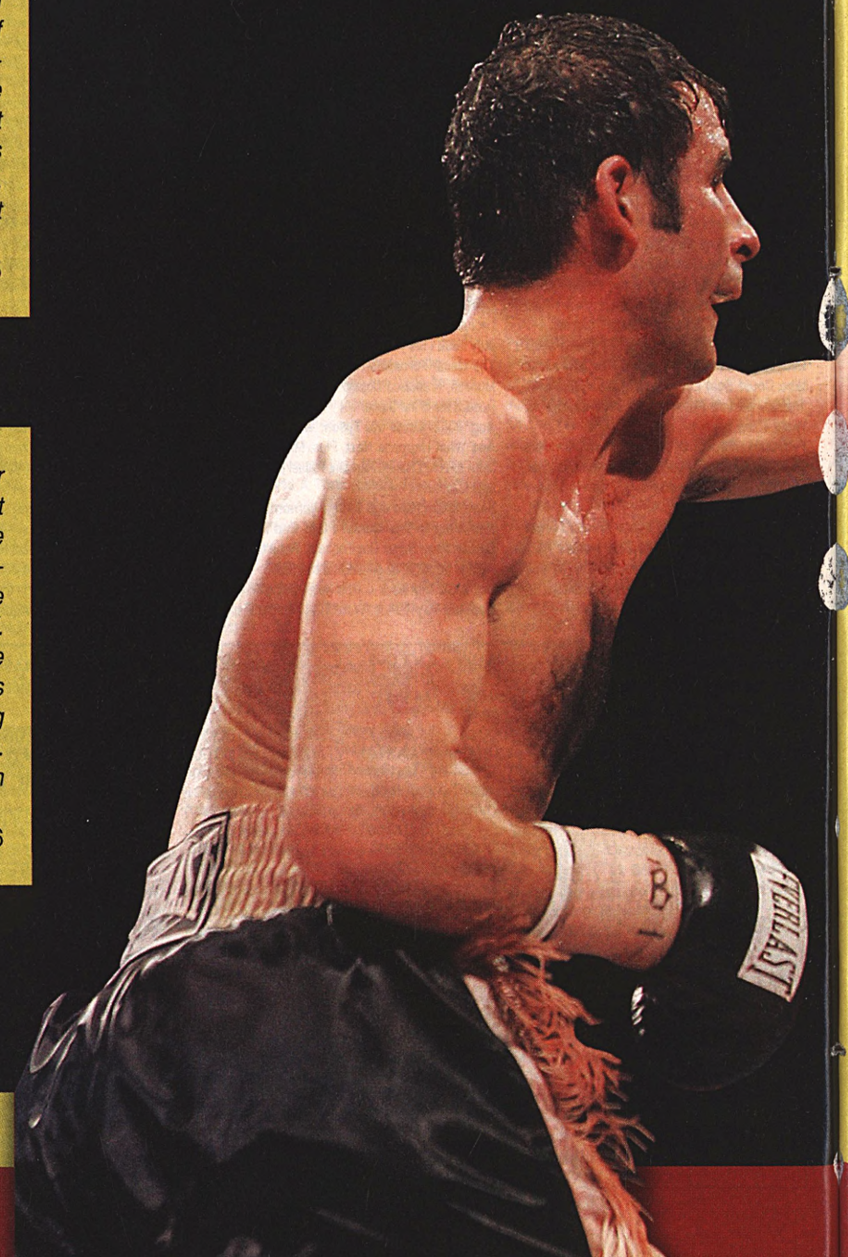
CALZAGHE PROVES HIS POINT...

"Joe Calzaghe is a disgrace. I don't believe this injury is legit. He never, ever wanted to fight Jeff Lacy. I suspected all along that Calzaghe didn't want any of this. I never thought they'd fight us; I always suspected it was all a bluff. There are some fighters who are willing to fight anyone, anytime, and there are fighters who just don't fit in that warrior category. Joe Calzaghe is one of the latter. I just think this is criminal."

—Gary Shaw, September 12, 2005

"Joe is a lot better fighter than I ever realized. I would have bet my house that the fight wouldn't have turned out like that. I would have lost it. I think the boxing world and U.S. audience will wake up to such a deserved fighter. The U.K. should be proud of Joe's performance tonight and the achievements of his career. I assure you there are some big doors going to be opening up for Joe. Frank Warren now has a bar of platinum in his hand."

—Gary Shaw, March 5, 2006



EMPHATICALLY!

Lacy Wasn't A Shaw Thing After All

By Brian Doogan
PHOTOS BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Joe Calzaghe held an icepack over his swollen left hand. A warm, enduring smile lit up his handsome, unmarked face. It was four o'clock in the Manchester morning, and a proud 33-year-old Welsh warrior, whose resolute spirit inside the ring is matched by a persistent reticence outside it, had just experienced the sweetest validation of his professional life, a victory over Jeff Lacy so emphatic that the mood in the MEN Arena was one of awe. As he sat down beside his promoter, Frank Warren, in a small room along the corridor from his dressing room, Gary Shaw, the voluble promoter of Jeff Lacy, left quietly and respectfully, with the bearing of a man who had just been held up and robbed by a ghost.

"What about the whites of these eyes?" Calzaghe asked, betraying his indignation at another of Shaw's prefight jibes, that every time he looked up he would see "the whites of Jeff Lacy's eyes," for the fearsome Floridian would suffocate him with pressure. Warren whispered in his ear, explaining that Shaw had been courteous and full of praise for his performance in the time it had taken Calzaghe to change into fresh clothes and to arrive at the postfight press conference. But he was not wholly pacified.

"Some of the comments by Gary Shaw calling me a chicken when I broke my hand (against Evans Ashira last September, causing the fight with Lacy to be postponed from November 5) hurt me," he said. "I focused on some of those comments, calling me a slapper, for instance. [Shaw and Lacy] said that I slap with my punches. Well, I must slap pretty damn hard, judging by the state of Jeff Lacy's face. After 30 seconds of me slap-

PHOTO BY PAUL ELLIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Even though he was suffering from a secret injury to his left wrist, Calzaghe seemed much more at ease and confident in the final days leading up to his showdown with the taciturn Lacy. That's promoter Frank Warren in the middle.

ping him, his legs were all over the place. It's a good job I don't punch correctly. What would he be like then?"

His question hung in the air, needing no response. Anyone who ever doubted Calzaghe during an injury-ravaged career—his hand problems contributing to a series of anticlimactic displays, from a deathly dull showing against David Starie on a Mike Tyson undercard, in the very same MEN Arena, to another faltering recent effort against Kabary Salem—will have little room for skepticism now. All he ever needed was the right fight to demonstrate that the purest of flames burnt in this Welsh dragon. Lacy provided his litmus test.

From the opening bell, Calzaghe was a triumphant amalgam of ambition, power, and speed. For a fight of this magnitude—a unification bout that brought together two alphabet super middleweight titleholders and yielded for the first time in the 168-pound division's 18-year history a recognized champion by THE RING—the total dominance he exerted throughout every minute of the 12 rounds of action was extraordinary. Lacy did not win 10 seconds of any round up to the midway point, and from then on his sole purpose was survival. Long before the finish, it had become almost unbearable to watch the 28-year-old from St. Petersburg suffer such a beating. Only Calzaghe's absolute mastery of his art made the brutal business compelling viewing. Lacy should have been saved, either by the referee or his corner, during a savage 12th-round denouement at the very latest. "I'd have pulled Lacy out after about eight or nine rounds," said Calzaghe's father and trainer, Enzo. "He took an absolute battering."

The superlatives flowed as smoothly as Calzaghe had ripped in his powerful punches. Warren described it as "the finest performance I've ever seen by a British boxer." Dan Birmingham, Lacy's decorated trainer, insisted that he had "never witnessed a better performance" in all his years. Calzaghe was a master of distance and timing, he declared. His torturous illustration of how a quick southpaw could beat a young, strong, big puncher amounted to "a boxing clinic." Beyond dispute is that Calzaghe has joined the pantheon of British boxing greats, for this was an exhibition to rival Randolph Turpin's defeat of Sugar Ray Robinson, John H. Stracey's stunning knockout of Jose Napoles, Barry McGuigan's emotional conquest over Eusebio Pedroza, Lloyd Honeyghan's demolition of Don Curry, and Ricky Hatton's relentless dismantlement of Kostya Tszyu. Calzaghe simply took the breath away, transformed in the face of imminent danger into the supreme embodiment of all his heart

and skill (which, in this corner, has never been doubted). On one unforgettable night, Calzaghe brought it all together. Perhaps no other super middleweight in history, even Roy Jones, could have lived with him in this form.

But for the real story of the fight, you had to be in Newbridge, a small, old mining town in south Wales, several weeks earlier. You had to see the demons crowding Calzaghe almost to breaking point. You had to hear the constant reassurances of his father reverberating throughout the gym ("Joe, you will destroy this boy."). You had to feel the weight of everything Calzaghe had achieved in 13 years as a fighter being threatened by one man in a career-defining encounter, a man whose own accomplishments were humble in comparison. Calzaghe had damaged his left wrist and the thought of pulling out at this late stage tortured him, for no one would know the truth. They would not even seek it out. Their minds, however injudiciously, would be made up, based on the history of a boxer who left too many questions unanswered.

"It was 50-50. It was that close," revealed Calzaghe. "The injury happened, and I was almost in bits because I knew what people would say. I was told also, in no uncertain terms, that if I pulled out, I would never get this kind of opportunity again. The stakes were at the highest they've probably ever been for me. I knew I could beat Jeff Lacy. I've always believed that. But the doubt was there because my hand hurt and I didn't know if I'd be getting in the ring anywhere near 100 percent. But, as always, I have my dad to thank. He kept my confidence up and persuaded me to go ahead with it. I owe him everything. If I'd pulled out, I would never have got a fight of this magnitude again. By the time I went back to work, I'd missed five days' training, but I trained double hard and it showed in the fight.

"Morning, noon, and night, ever since the match was made I had Jeff Lacy on my mind. I've never been so dedicated and focused for a fight. I knew from what he was saying that he was going to try to walk straight through me, but I believed in my ability and refocused, and you saw what happened. I've lived with some disappointments in my career for a long time. Big fights against Roy Jones, Bernard Hopkins, and others have been talked about, but have never happened, and it's never been because I didn't want them to. I've always wanted that kind of fight because I've always believed that I'm the best 12-stone (168-pound) fighter in the world. So much trash has been spoken about me that when it came to me and Lacy in that ring, I just

The 33-year-old Calzaghe established his dominance in the very first round, and, in quick order, he had Lacy busted up and bleeding. The Welshman emerged virtually unmarked and his performance is considered one of the greatest of all-time by a British boxer.

As the bout progressed, the 28-year-old Lacy became a pitiful sight, his face bleeding and swollen from the effects of Calzaghe's painful punches. Many observers felt that either the referee or Lacy's corner should have stopped the fight, but the battered fighter hung in until the final bell.

knew I was going to demolish him—and that's what I did."

Young, hungry, and unbeaten in 22 fights, Lacy came to the ring representing the greatest challenge of Calzaghe's 40-fight career. A former Olympian at the 2000 Games in Sydney, he had earned comparison, flatteringly, with the youthful Mike Tyson for the malevolence visited on the majority of his opponents, 17 of whom never reached the final bell. "I keep the heat on 'em. I never stop," he explained, "and most men fall apart under that pressure."

But if "most men" are the likes of Robin Reid and Scott Pemberton, whom Lacy blasted aside in eight and two rounds, respectively, Calzaghe is a league apart, and the American appeared to recognize this under the intensity of fight week when he cancelled a couple of open workouts and a joint appearance with Calzaghe on the set of the British TV soap *Coronation Street*. His surly mood contrasted vividly with Calzaghe's cool confidence. "He comes forward and wants to knock every fighter out, but I have tremendous hand speed for a super middleweight and Lacy will never have been in the ring with anybody as quick, busy, and heavy-handed as me," Calzaghe predicted. "He's made for me."

The call could not have been more accurate. Calzaghe imposed himself on Lacy in round one, demonstrating his vastly superior hand speed and hurting the American with a series of powerful, accurate blows, and he never relented. With his southpaw lead, Calzaghe would penetrate Lacy's guard and then unload blistering volleys of punches that could have been fired by a Gatlin gun. A strong right hand and crushing left cross had Lacy in trouble and two more right hands left

him in serious danger of going down in the opening round. Calzaghe was boxing brilliantly.

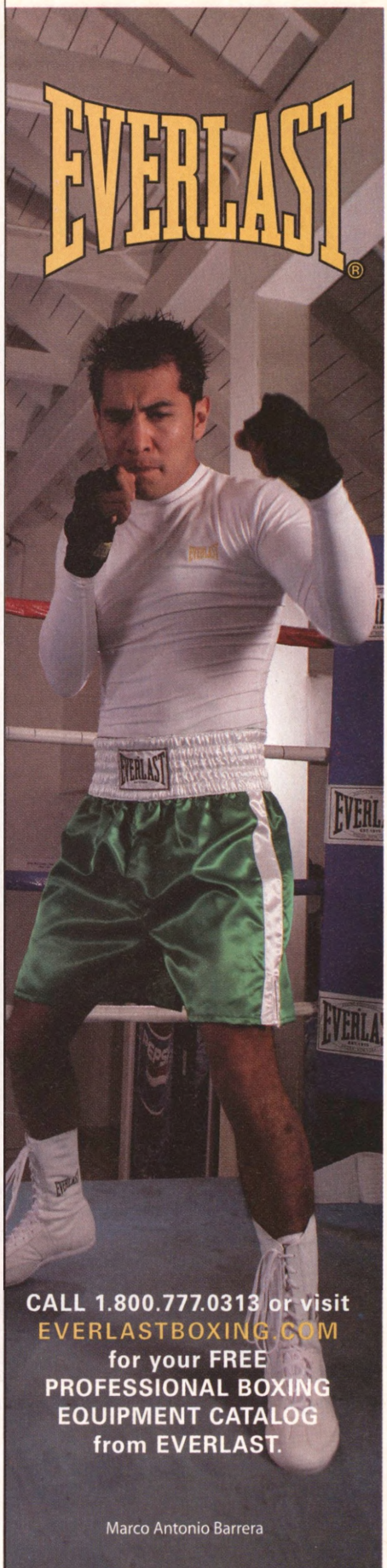
For all his aggression over the opening rounds, however, Lacy remained dangerous and stunned Calzaghe with a left hook at the start of the third. But it was Calzaghe's left hand, in particular when he fired it swiftly in the arc of an uppercut that was far more decisive. Time and again he staggered the American with combinations disguised as cluster bombs. By round four, Lacy was cut around both eyes and cut a forlorn figure as Calzaghe bamboozled him with the power of his punching. It was as big a performance as any fighter, in the circumstances, could have produced. In the fifth, another hard left ricocheted off Lacy's jaw, and it was only his ability to absorb such heavy punishment that kept him in the fight. By the halfway stage, he was a mile behind on the scorecards and, by the end of the seventh, he was on the verge of being stopped. Calzaghe had backed him against his corner post where two left hooks, amid a maelstrom of an onslaught, further diminished Lacy's withering powers of resistance. Referee Raul Caiz Sr., from California, was moved to visit Lacy's corner at the end of the round to ask him if he wanted to continue, a ritual he repeated until the end of the bout.

"I knew his corner wouldn't pull him out, because Lacy's a warrior," Calzaghe reflected. "But I was landing five-, six-punch combinations repeatedly, and he had no answer to that."

Finally, in the last round, Lacy was floored for the first time in his professional career, by a Calzaghe left. The shellacking he took ought to have prompted Caiz to intervene, for boxing is a sport, not a glorified slaughter. Victor and vanquished had been well and truly identified. Remember Gerald McClellan, who came to Britain in 1995 to face Nigel Benn with the same reputation for destruction that Lacy had? Then think again about whether Caiz or Lacy's corner should have made the decision.

Mercifully, Lacy was still standing when the final bell rang and, as Calzaghe raised his arms aloft, the beaten man nodded graciously. The judges' scorecards were a mere formal-

Lacy is doused with water between rounds in an effort to revive him, but if it hadn't been for a big heart and a strong chin, he wouldn't have lasted the distance.



Calzaghe's performance was so dominant, it has been compared to Randy Turpin's upset of Ray Robinson and Ricky Hatton's TKO of Kostya Tszyu.

ity. Roy Francis (England) and Adalaide Byrd (USA) both scored 119-107, while Nelson Vasquez (Puerto Rico) had it 119-105, with Calzaghe penalized a point for an illegal punch in the 11th round. THE RING saw it 119-106.

"I'd love to fight Roy Jones at light heavyweight because he's a legend, and Antonio Tarver would also be a good fight," Calzaghe speculated. "But I must admit that I like the thought of being the champion of the super middleweights, recognized by everybody, so it might just tempt me to stay in this division."

Calzaghe finally floored Lacy in the 12th round, when he connected with a left hook while his foe was off balance. But Lacy beat referee Raul Caiz' count and was still on his feet, albeit unsteadily, at the final bell.

Whatever about his future, Calzaghe has laid to rest the myths about his past. Just weeks short of his 34th birthday, he bounced for 12 rounds on the balls of his feet, moved, and threw pinpoint, rapid-fire punches in the style of Sugar Ray and, given the majestic manner of his victory, it is no sacrilege to invoke Robinson's name.

"When I was 13, I went to see the careers teacher at school and she asked me how I wanted to earn a living," Calzaghe said before leaving. "I said I was going to be a world champion boxer. She looked at me and laughed."

No one is laughing derisively now, least of all Gary Shaw. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.

After Shutting Vargas' Eye ...

MOSLEY OPENS THE EYES OF HIS CRITICS

By Ivan Goldman

Veteran Shane Mosley was only one loss short of fringe status when he fought through the storm and vanquished "Ferocious" Fernando Vargas. But now that he's clearly a player again, a fat question remains: How far can Sugar Shane go in this, the third stage of his career?

During Stage One, before he ran into Vernon Forrest in January 2002, sharp, durable, hard-working Mosley, the number one pound-for-pound fighter, was destined, thought many analysts, to be the next Sugar Ray Robinson. After

PHOTO BY WILL HART HBO

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Although a naturally smaller man, Mosley was quicker than Vargas and scored frequently with sharp right hands, many of which landed on Vargas' left eye. It was a pattern that ultimately led to "El Feroz'" downfall.

Forrest and Winky Wright dealt him two losses apiece, Mosley could be likened to one of those formerly popular nightclubs that no one wants to be seen in anymore. That was Stage Two.

Stage Three, which began when he stopped Vargas in the 10th round, feels more realistic than either Stage One or Two. Sugar Shane can now be viewed as a talented fighter who might still surprise some world-beaters but will never again be mentioned in the same breath as Sugar Ray Leonard, much less Sugar Ray Robinson.

Less than an hour after stepping out of the ring following the Vargas victory, Mosley declared his intention to move down from junior middleweight into a welterweight pack thick with possibilities. Also within the hour, he was being discussed as a potential opponent for super-slick Floyd Mayweather, who sits atop THE RING's list of best fighters pound-for-pound. At this writing, Mayweather had an empty spot on his schedule following his April 8 showdown with Zab Judah. But not everyone agreed that seeking Mayweather was Mosley's best course.

"Shane should go after the winner of Carlos Baldomir and Arturo Gatti," said California official Marty Denkin. "I think fighting Mayweather would be stupid. But everything is about money, and he'll go after Mayweather, who I think would certainly love to fight him."

Said boxing historian Bruce Bebb, "You know what I'd like to see Shane do? Quit right now, when he's on top. I don't want to see him hurt, and I'd really hate to see him go down that chute and fight Mayweather and become another notch on his belt."

Denkin, who's judged and refereed hundreds of championship fights, contended Mosley defeated a Vargas "who was maybe 80 percent Vargas. The word was out that he was very, very heavy before the fight, so he was able to get down to the 154-pound limit weight-wise, but not fighting-wise."

Neither fighter had had a really good outing in years. Vargas, at age 28, was six years younger than Mosley, but showing more wear and tear. Vargas still draws a crowd, and against a name fighter like Mosley, was able draw a bigger

one. The Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, which hosted the bout, announced attendance at 9,237, even with nosebleed seats priced at a stiff $100.

Going back down to welter makes sense for Mosley in terms of fighting and probably in terms of money as well, simply because he's more likely to succeed there. His height is usually listed at 5'9" or 5'10", but 5'8" is closer to the truth. He weighed in at 152 against Vargas, who tipped the scales at 153½. After the fight, Mosley said he ate breakfast before the weigh-in to get closer to the 154-pound limit.

Team Vargas is eager for a rematch, but even if Mosley were to beat him again, it's not clear where he could go next in the junior middleweight division. Virtually everyone would own a serious size advantage. In his previous outing, against Jose Luis Cruz, Mosley came in at 148.

Both Mosley and junior middleweight Oscar De Hoya said there's no chance of them staging a third contest. Along with Bernard Hopkins, Mosley is a partner in Golden Boy Promotions, whose principal owner is De La Hoya.

But the welterweight division is teeming with opportunities. In addition to Mayweather, Gatti, and Baldomir, there's Antonio Margarito and Judah, for instance. De La Hoya also noted the distinct possibility that some name junior welters might go up one division to make a fight with Mosley. They include Ricky Hatton and Miguel Cotto, both of whom attract sizeable followings in Britain and Puerto Rico, respectively.

"I absolutely want revenge," said Vargas, who, unlike Mosley, apparently feels a need to personalize his business in the ring. But Denkin, for one, isn't sure a rematch is even possible, given Vargas' worsening battle with the scale. Denkin said he wouldn't be surprised to see Vargas go straight past middleweight to compete at 168 pounds.

Watching Vargas starve didn't seem to bother his co-manager Shelly Finkel, who was so eager for a rematch that when he couldn't find Mosley at the postfight news conference, he tried to get a deal going with Shane's wife, Jin Mosley *(see sidebar)*.

Mosley-Vargas gave both teams a nice payday, $3-million to Mosley and $4-million to Vargas before potential pay-per-view royalties from the estimated 410,000 buys kicked in. In a rematch, Vargas might be a dried-out sponge, and Mosley belongs seven pounds south of junior middle. But those are trivialities for anyone looking at the bottom line and only the bottom line.

Against name fighters, Mosley appears destined to take the short end of the purse even when he's favored, as he was against Vargas. After edging De La Hoya twice, he was still offered the short end for a third match, which he couldn't bring himself to accept. That's when he risked the junior middleweight world championship against dangerous Winky Wright instead—for far less money than he'd have made against De La Hoya. After he lost back-to-back con-

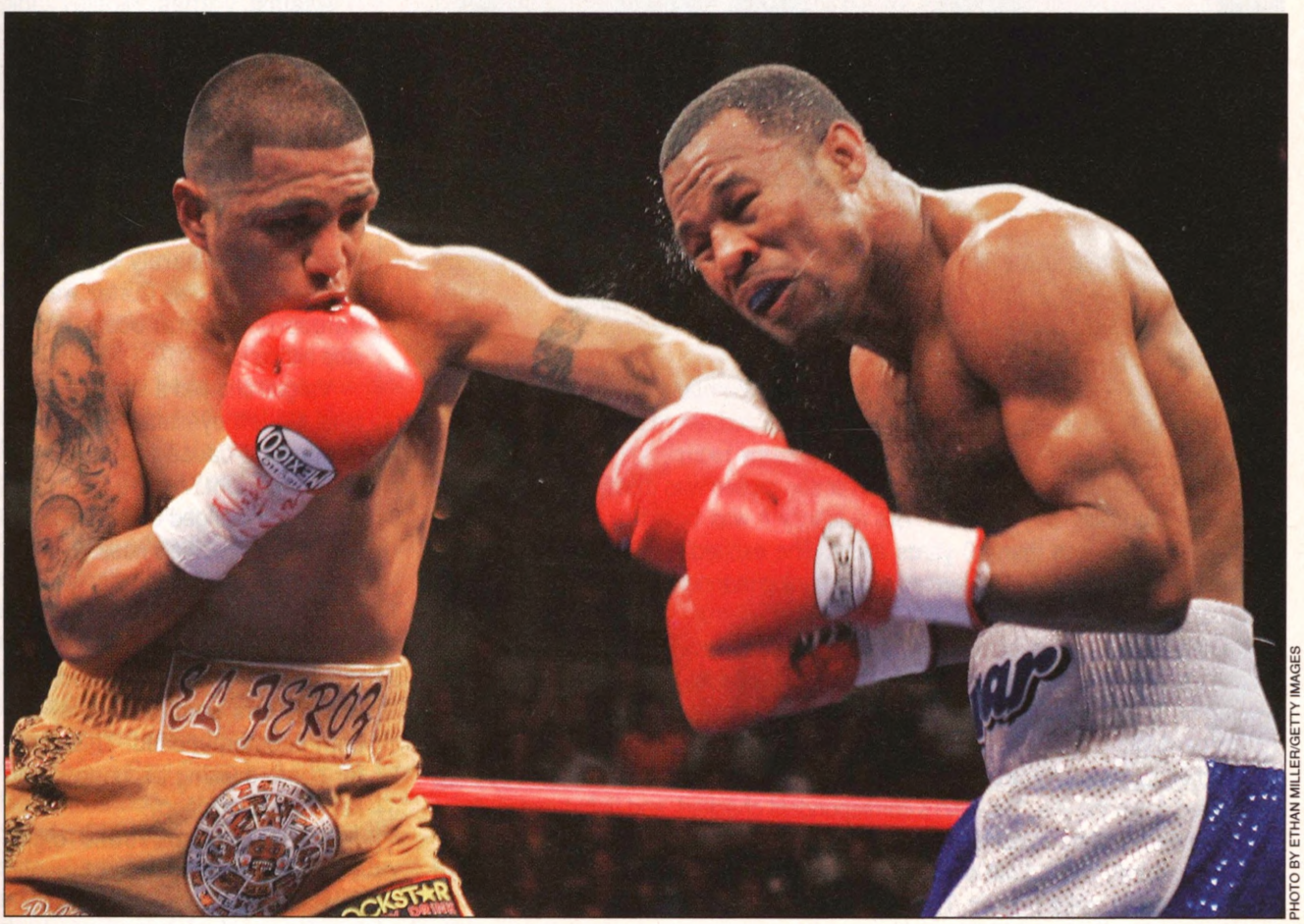


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Vargas also had his moments in the crowd-pleasing tussle that attracted a surprisingly large pay-per-view figure of approximately 410,000 buys. There were also more than 9,000 paying customers at the Mandalay Bay Events Center.

tests with Winky, no one could argue anymore that Mosley was a great fighter who just happened to match up poorly against Forrest.

Mosley comes to fight, not dance. But he can't seem to draw a sizeable crowd unless he's in against someone fans really want to see. Neither do his personal qualities attract megabucks. Within the boxing community, straight-shooter Shane is a man with no enemies. Vargas clearly worked hard to build him up in his mind as someone who deserved a beating. Richard Allen, who runs the L.A. Boxing Club where Mosley trained for years, says his ever-present grin was there long before he fought his way into the top tier.

"Shane Mosley is a great human being," said Denkin, "but being a great human being doesn't count when he gets in the ring. Forrest and Wright exposed him. They showed that he can't hurt you. He has speed, fast hands, but he doesn't have power. The judges can't overlook his punches, but they're tap, tap, tap."

The numbers tell a story. Mosley was 32-0 (30) as a lightweight. After taking the IBF lightweight title from Philip Holiday in 1997, he stopped all eight challengers. Then he went straight to welter in 1999, bypassing junior welter. Since then he's compiled a record of 10-4 (6).

Denkin, like Bebb, gives Mosley little chance against phenomenally talented Mayweather, who turned pro in 1996 as a junior lightweight.

"Vargas was a perfect fit for Mosley," Denkin said. "Mayweather isn't. To me, Mayweather gives everybody a headache." Denkin, however, sees Mosley as having the edge over either Margarito or Judah. "I think he's too smart for Zab Judah. Shane would be all over him, and Margarito hasn't fought guys who move around. He hasn't proved himself against that style."

Now that Mosley is back in contention, his team knows that at 34 he has no time to waste on tune-ups. Sugar Shane has never looked for an easy touch anyway. When he sees a talented fighter, his instinct is to look him up.

Against Vargas, Mosley took charge from the first, proving his superior hand speed and athleticism. Especially in the early rounds, Vargas, 27-3 (22), tended to overextend his punches, which caused him to fall forward when he missed. His formerly stiff jab was mostly not there, and he barely moved his head. Referee Joe Cortez warned Vargas on several occasions to stop hitting low.

Vargas showed a slight abrasion over his left eye after round one, apparently caused by a Mosley overhand right. As the fight wore on, Mosley banged away at it and it grew like Pinocchio's nose.

In the middle rounds, Vargas used his superior strength to repeatedly muscle Mosley back to the ropes, with only mixed success. Both fighters went to the body and both counterpunched. This made for some exciting exchanges and kept the crowd happy.

By the end of round eight, Vargas' left eye was shut and grotesquely swollen. Cortez, ring physician Dr. David Watson, and commission Executive Director

MUD WRESTLING, ANYONE?

Finkel (left) almost instigated a catfight between Jin (right) and Martha

Emotions ran high at the Shane Mosley-Fernando Vargas postfight press conference, exacerbated by a $100,000 bet made between the fighters over who would stop whom. Though Vargas disagreed with the stoppage, he immediately affirmed he would pay up. He also pushed hard for a rematch.

Mosley hadn't entered the room yet, so Vargas' co-manager Shelly Finkel took the microphone, and for reasons known only to him, addressed the rematch question to Mosley's wife, Jin, who was sitting at the back of the room.

Jin didn't have a microphone, so whatever she replied was mostly inaudible in the expansive Mandalay Bay ballroom. But evidently it was heard by Vargas' fiancée, Martha, standing less than 10 yards away. She excitedly yelled (also inaudible) remarks at Jin in what must be termed a threatening manner.

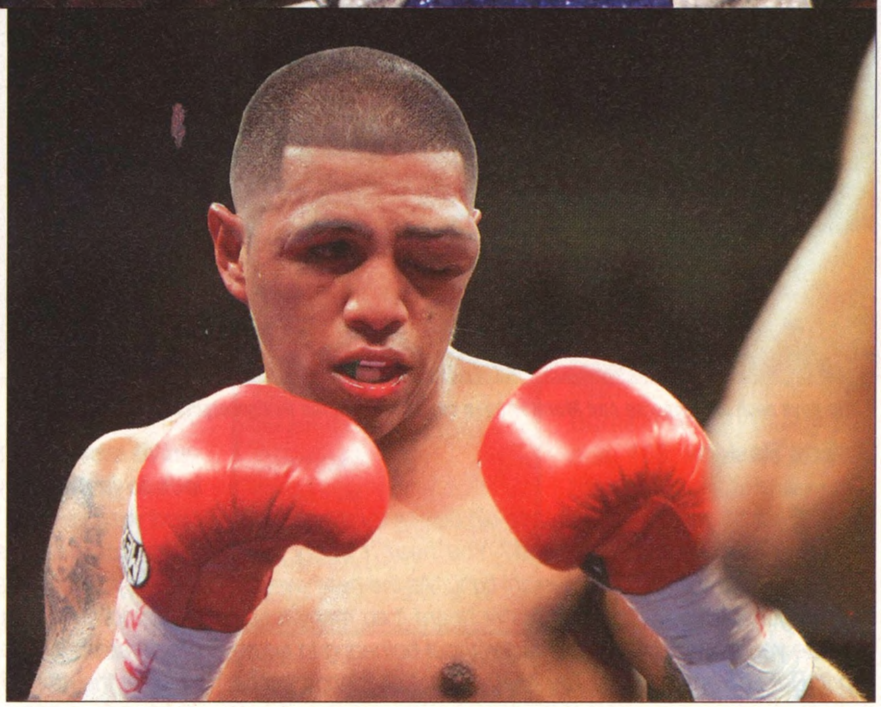
Jin crooked a finger at Martha in a "come hither" gesture, and at this point friends restrained an even more agitated Martha. If you saw George Brett's reaction when umpires nullified his 1983 game-winning home run against the Yankees because of pine tar on the bat, then you have a pretty good idea what's being described here.

Bernard Hopkins, partnered with Mosley through Golden Boy Promotions, smelled an opportunity, wondering aloud whether a Jin-Martha match could be scheduled down the line. THE RING's correspondent checked, and unfortunately there was no mud wrestling equipment around. Hey, these are attractive women.

Vargas wisely stayed out of the entire mess, and if he had anything to say to Martha, he didn't make it public. There's a lesson in there for Finkel.

—I.G.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES



Vargas never stopped bulling forward, but could not find a way to avoid Mosley's right hand (above). By the end of the ninth round, Vargas' eye and the surrounding area were grotesquely swollen (right).

Marc Ratner decided if Vargas clearly couldn't see the punches coming, they'd stop the contest. One minute, 22 seconds into the 10th round, Cortez did.

Vargas said he believed he was dictating the fight and hurting Mosley. Mosley conceded Vargas "has a heavy punch. It knocks you back." But the punches didn't have the snap of De La Hoya's, he added. De La Hoya was ecstatic to see his partner Mosley defeat a fighter who for years had practically made his living insulting De La Hoya—until De La Hoya knocked him senseless in 2002.

After nine rounds, judges Chuck Giampa and Paul Smith had it 86-85 for Mosley. Patricia Jarman saw it 86-85, Vargas. Proving Las Vegas is still the same Las Vegas, she inexplicably scored the first round, which Mosley clearly dominated, for Vargas. THE RING had it 87-84, Mosley.

In terms of Mosley's career, the fact that he was in another crowd-pleaser is almost as important as the victory. And although he's looking at many uncertainties as his fighting days dwindle, that's not bad news for him or the fans. In the fight business, uncertainty draws a crowd. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING 's West Coast correspondent.

Our Exclusive Annual Report

THE STATE OF THE GAME

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

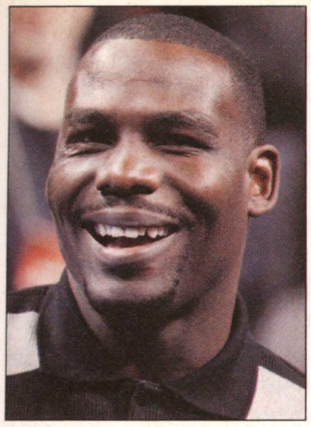
Little guys such as Pacquiao and Morales have overshadowed the heavyweights

By Eric Raskin

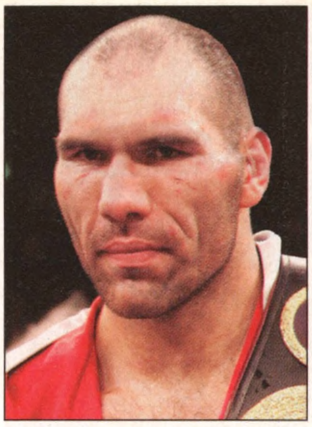
What do you do when an age-old boxing truism suddenly becomes a falsehood? You hear it every time there's a major heavyweight fight: "As the heavyweight division goes, so goes boxing." We've heard it so many times over the years, we just took it as fact without bothering to question it. But now we have to. The heavyweight division is worse than it's been at any point in the last half-century, and yet, thanks to all of the great fights being made in the lower weight classes, the sport is perfectly healthy. The heavyweight division is going one way, and boxing is going the other way. What's next? Styles don't make fights, after all? Feel free to hook with a hooker? What's good for the goose is lousy for the gander?

We know this much is still true: There's no better place to look to learn everything about the current condition of the sport we love than "The State Of The Game," a section we've been compiling every year since way back when Jim Lampley's hair was dark, Evander Holyfield's hair was existent, and Don King's hair was ... well ... pretty much exactly the same as it is now.

Over the next 16 pages, we break down the sport division by division, from 330-pound heavyweight beltholder Nicolay Valuev to strawweight beltholders Yutaka Niida, Muhammad Rachman, and Eagle Kyowa, who weigh 315 pounds combined. (By the way, if you're looking for a hot gimmick, instead of Ann Wolfe fighting men, how about Valuev fighting three strawweights at once? Don't tell us you wouldn't order that pay-per-view.)

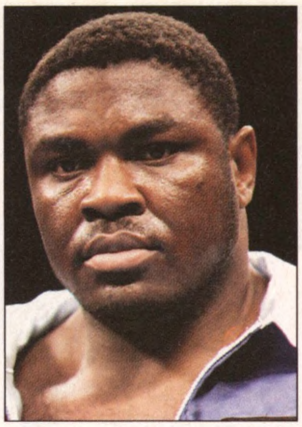


Hasim Rahman



Nicolay Valuev

Calvin Brock



Samuel Peter

One note as you read this State of the Game: In each division, we name a fighter who "Deserves A Title Shot." What this means in a given division depends on whether or not there's a RING champ. If there is one, then we've named the fighter most deserving of a crack at that champ. If not, then we've named a non-beltholder worthy of a shot at an alphabet title.

HEAVYWEIGHT

Whether you considered **Vitali Klitschko** the legit heavyweight champion or not, everybody in their right mind at least ranked him as the number-one guy in the division, and in lieu of a real champ, it's nice to have a clear top dog. When Vitali retired somewhat unexpectedly last November, suddenly we didn't even have that anymore. No top dog. No leader whatsoever in the sport's most important division. And no idea how long we'd have to wait for that to change.

As it turned out, the wait is going to be longer than expected due to the inconclusive 12-round draw between **Hasim Rahman** and **James Toney** in March. Hopefully, the **Chris Byrd-Wladimir Klitschko** bout, scheduled for April 22 in Mannheim, Germany, will have ended in a more definitive manner, which would at least nudge the search for a heavyweight champion a tad closer to resolution. But the plan to match the winners of Rahman-Toney and Byrd-Klitschko have obviously suffered a serious blow. As this issue went to press, a Toney-Rahman rematch isn't even being discussed, as Rahman plans to defend the WBC belt against former conqueror **Oleg Maskaev**. Therefore, hopes of a straightforward, four-man tournament and an opportunity for the division to get itself on the road back to prosperity will, at the very least, be delayed.

The one guy we'd feel bad for if this mini-tourney plays out is **Lamon Brewster**, and that's why we've listed him in the accompanying sidebar as the fighter who "Deserves A Title Shot," even though he does already have a fringe alphabet belt. Brewster really ought to be in this mix, but for whatever reason, he's stuck fighting borderline top-20 guys like **Sergei Liakhovich**—which is fine if he's looking to extend his record for "consecutive white guys defeated," but otherwise, it doesn't mean much.

As for the rest of the division, there isn't a lot of new blood to spark anybody's interest. **Calvin Brock** is the one undefeated guy worth getting mildly excited about, but that win he scored over **Jameel McCline** has since lost some luster. We've spent much more time in the past year saying goodbye to familiar faces than saying hello to new ones, as the elder Klitschko brother, **Mike Tyson**, and **Norman Stone** have all exited the stage for perhaps the final time. If that's the case, we'll miss them. Well, some of them.

Think About It: The one superlative you can attach to **Nicolay Valuev** is that he's the largest heavyweight titleholder ever, and if we really want to make him look huge, let's prop him up next to the smallest heavyweight champ of all-time, Tommy Burns. Valuev stands 7'0". That gives him 17 inches over the 5'7" Burns. Valuev has an 85-inch reach. That's 10½ inches longer than Burns' 74½-inch wingspan. And Valuev has weighed as much as 330 pounds, while Burns weighed barely half that, 168, when he lost the title to Jack Johnson. Of course, that 330 includes back hair, so in fairness, the size discrepancy isn't quite as massive as the stats would indicate.

HEAVYWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Samuel Peter

Best Boxer
James Toney

Most Protected
Malik Scott

Is He Still Around?
Henry Akinwande

Matchmaker's Dream
James Toney-Wladimir Klitschko

Deserves A Title Shot
Lamon Brewster

Most Fun To Watch
Vinny Maddalone

On The Way Down
Jameel McCline

Underrated
Sultan Ibragimov

Overrated
David Tua

Best Fight In 2005
Lamon Brewster
KO 9 Luan Krasniqi

CRUISERWEIGHT

For a long time, it was fashionable to rip the cruiserweight division, to call it a worthless wasteland for

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Bell tags Mormeck with a right en route to 10th-round TKO

undersized wannabe heavyweights and fat light heavies. And, sure the depth of talent at cruiser is still mediocre at best; you don't see a lot of potential pound-for-pounders among these ranks. But nearly every division in boxing could take a cue from the cruisers when it comes to the best fighters facing each other. If this division is a little bit short on great fighters, it certainly is not at all short on great fights.

Look at how many of the 200-pounders rated by THE RING have already fought each other. Champ **O'Neil Bell** has taken on **Jean-Marc Mormeck** and **Dale Brown**. Number-one contender **Guillermo Jones** has met **Steve Cunningham**, **Johnny Nelson**, and **Wayne Braithwaite**. Mormeck has faced Braithwaite (when they were rated first and second in the division), Bell, Brown, and **Virgil Hill**. And it all just continues right on down the line. The best are not afraid to tackle the best here, because they're all confident, hungry fighters and they know they can't make money in this division taking pointless mismatches.

Bell became king of the division with his upset kayo of Mormeck in January, and there are several extremely worthy challengers—most notably Jones, Cunningham (who is scheduled to get the first shot), and Brown, who's ranked lower than the others, but may deserve a crack the most on account of the fact that he was robbed by the judges when he and Bell met in '05. Interestingly, for all of those deserving challengers, if Bell really wants to make something resembling a superfight and make a paycheck approaching seven figures, he probably needs light heavyweight champ Antonio Tarver to move up. Put that fight in Georgia or Florida, with two RING champs facing each other, and you're going to sell some tickets.

The other fact about the cruisers worth mentioning is how many fighters old enough to be grandfathers are still hanging on and doing well. Nelson is 38, **Carl Thompson** is 41, and Hill—for whom the nickname "Over The" apparently doesn't yet apply—is 42. What are the chances George Foreman can get down to cruiserweight?

Think About It: You have Arturo "Thunder" Gatti ... and then you have **Sebastian Rothmann**. The South African is like the bizarro Gatti, in that he repeatedly finds a way to lose in dramatic fashion. In February '04, he was comfortably ahead of Carl Thompson, only to get knocked out by a single punch in the ninth round. Three months later, he lost a majority decision to Steve Cunningham by a single point. And then, last August, he was fighting a brilliant fight against future undisputed champion O'Neil Bell, seemed to have a lead built up, and got starched by a single shot with just four minutes remaining in the bout. Rothmann ought to look into playing with horseshoes or hand grenades, since at least close counts for something with those objects.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

The alphabet scoundrels can strip **Antonio Tarver** all they want (and believe us, they have), but they can't take away the two belts that are really valuable to him. One is THE RING light heavyweight championship belt, the one that makes it easy for us all to just ignore the alphabet nonsense. And the other is the heavyweight title belt he wears as Mason "The Line" Dixon in the upcoming *Rocky Balboa*. No, it doesn't make Tarver the heavyweight champion. But it should help make him a major boxing celebrity, and that in turn could significantly increase his future paydays.

"The Magic Man" has

CRUISERWEIGHT

Best Puncher
O'Neil Bell

Best Boxer
Johnny Nelson

Most Protected
Johny Jensen

Is He Still Around?
Lou Del Valle

Matchmaker's Dream
O'Neil Bell-Antonio Tarver

Deserves A Title Shot
Dale Brown

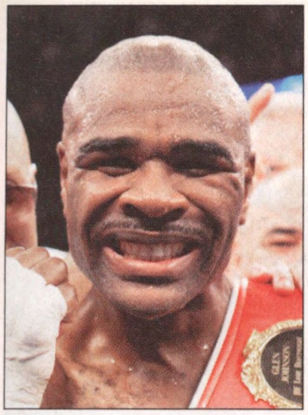
Most Fun To Watch
O'Neil Bell

On The Way Down
Kelvin Davis

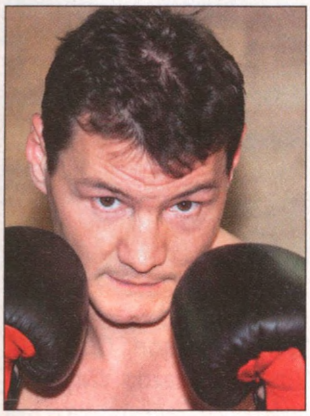
Underrated
Sebastian Rothmann

Overrated
Alexander Gurov

Best Fight In 2005
O'Neil Bell KO 11 Sebastian Rothmann



Glen Johnson



Zsolt Erde

hinted in real life at a desire to move up to heavyweight, but the marquee matchups don't seem to be there for him at the moment, so instead, he has a June defense planned against former middleweight champ **Bernard Hopkins**. If the favored Tarver prevails and is looking for another big fight at 175 pounds, there's always a rubber match with **Glen Johnson**, if Tarver's willing to go through another 12 rounds of hard work to turn away his number-one contender.

Meanwhile, the alphabet straps are all held by a bunch of Europeans, and while they're all decent fighters, their title claims are quite tenuous. England's **Clinton Woods** and the exciting **Tomasz Adamek** of Poland both have belts that were stripped from real champions Tarver and Johnson for having the audacity to fight each other, while Frenchman **Fabrice Tiozzo** has been sitting on a stupid non-"super" belt he won a couple of years ago. Then there's Germany-based Hungarian **Zsolt Erdei**, whose belt has a more respectable lineage, but who still has a lot to prove, considering that **Julio Gonzalez** remains the best fighter he's faced.

Just as it was during the **Roy Jones** era (which, by the way, is 100 percent over, whether Roy realizes it or not), the light heavyweight division is not exactly boxing's deepest. It also isn't boxing's youngest, with Tarver, Johnson, and Jones all 37 years old, with Tarver planning on fighting a 41-year-old middleweight, and with 33 being the average of the fighters ranked by THE RING.

Think About It: If Jones were to retire now, he'd have lost his last three fights. We were curious, so we checked how many guys in the "Modern" category in the International Boxing Hall of Fame could say the same, and as it turns out, it's not exactly a rarity for great fighters to sputter toward the finish line like that. Eleven of the 94 "Modern" fighters in the Hall lost at least three in a row to end their careers. Among those 11, six lost their last three, three lost their last four, and two ended on even worse streaks than that: Joey Maxim, who dropped six in a row at the end, and Bob Montgomery, who tops the list with seven straight defeats down the stretch.

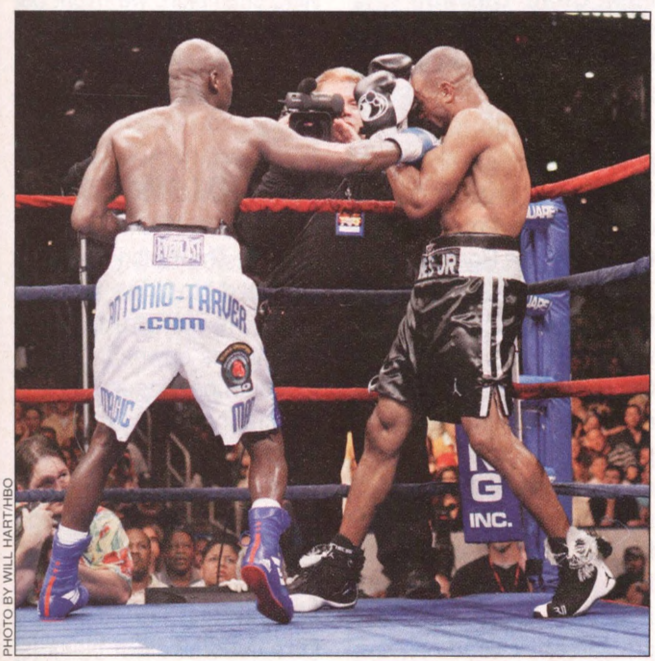


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Tarver outpoints Jones in tepid rubber match

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Antonio Tarver

Best Boxer
Zsolt Erdei

Most Protected
Dawid Kostecki

Is He Still Around?
Reggie Johnson

Matchmaker's Dream
Antonio Tarver-
Glen Johnson III

Deserves A Title Shot
Glen Johnson

Most Fun To Watch
Tomasz Adamek

On The Way Down
George Khalid Jones

Underrated
Eric Harding

Overrated
Silvio Branco

Best Fight In 2005
Tomasz Adamek W 12
Paul Briggs

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT

Normally, when you hear the words "Wales" and "boxing" together, you think of the first word spelled differently and you picture Butterbean bumping blubber with James Toney. But now, Wales is very much on the boxing map. Wales is home to the legitimate super middleweight champion of the world. **Joe Calzaghe** has to be recognized as one of the very best fighters in the sport, as his destruction of **Jeff Lacy** in March was as dominant a big-fight performance as we've seen in years.

Calzaghe's win netted him THE RING title (the first at 168 pounds) and legitimized an 8½-year alphabet odyssey that meant just about as little as a reign that long could possibly mean. All the broken hands, all the broken promises, all the broken-down challengers, it had been the stuff of ridicule from the fans and the media for far too long. This was Calzaghe's one chance to prove his greatness. At the expense of Lacy and his poorly protected face, the Welshman's greatness was indeed proven—and then some.

Sometimes, when two of a division's best clash and

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Danny Green

Best Boxer
Joe Calzaghe

Most Protected
Denis Inkin

Is He Still Around?
Carl Daniels

Matchmaker's Dream
Joe Calzaghe-Mikkel Kessler

Deserves A Title Shot
Mikkel Kessler

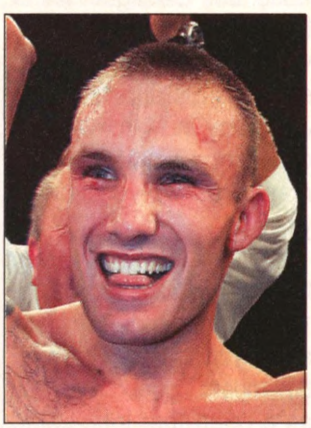
Most Fun To Watch
Peter Manfredo

On The Way Down
Robin Reid

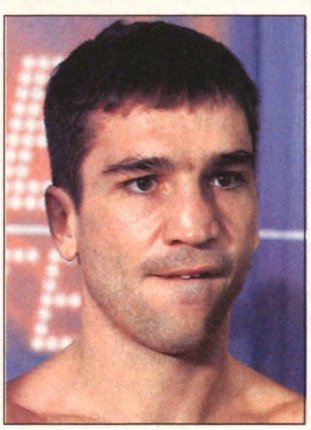
Underrated
Lucian Bute

Overrated
Jackson Chanet

Best Fight In 2005
Markus Beyer W 12
Danny Green



Mikkel Kessler



Markus Beyer

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Calzaghe hammers Lacy to win super middleweight crown

one dominates, there are no challenges left in that division. But that's not the case here, as one very appealing challenge looms. **Mikkel Kessler** has developed a strong buzz without ever fighting on American TV, blowing through a series of credible opponents, mostly in his native Denmark. Calzaghe-Kessler would obviously be huge in Europe. But with Calzaghe having now reached a new level of popularity in America, it could be huge on Showtime too. Let's hope we see it before Calzaghe decides to abandon his championship and move up to 175 pounds.

Lower down the rankings, there are some decent fighters, but none who seem overly threatening to the top two. **Markus Beyer** is a proven mediocrity. **Danny Green** has been beaten by Beyer. **Anthony Mundine** has been beaten by Kessler. Green and Mundine were a few weeks away from squaring off in one of the biggest matches in Australian boxing history as we went to press, but it's questionable whether anyone will care to see the winner there face Calzaghe.

One thing the division does have is interesting prospects. **Librado Andrade** can prove he's for real in his scheduled bout with veteran **Otis Grant**. Six-foot, three-inch **Chad Dawson** and wicked-hitting **Allan Green** have made people take notice on *ShoBox*. And **Peter Manfredo** has huge star potential thanks to his *Contender* exposure and his recent improvement under trainer Freddie Roach.

Think About It: Lacy's loss reduces the combined record of the 2000 U.S. Olympic boxing team to a mediocre (at least in terms of prospects in the early stages of their careers) 199-17, and reduces the number of undefeated team members to four. And among those four is Olanda Anderson, whose pro career included only two fights, both back in '02. In fact, Anderson, Clarence Vinson, Ricardo Williams, and David Jackson have all been inactive for at least a year and may be done with boxing already. On the whole, this team that bombed in Sydney hasn't done much better in the pros. Had Lacy defeated Calzaghe and joined Jermain Taylor as a RING champion, we might be singing a different tune. But all in all, you have to say this was a sub-par Olympic class.

MIDDLEWEIGHT

Well, the torch has been passed. The historic reign of **Bernard Hopkins** is over, and a new era at middleweight has dawned. Maybe the torch passing lacked the conclusiveness of Rocky Marciano-Joe Louis or Larry Holmes-Muhammad Ali. But thanks to a pair of close decision wins, **Jermain Taylor** has run Hopkins out of the division, and the post-Hopkins middleweight class is quickly getting interesting.

Taylor isn't milking his undisputed championship one bit, having signed to fight number-one contender **Winky Wright** on June 17. The new champ is either extremely brave, extremely crazy, or an equal mix of both, because he could've taken a much easier defense in his native Arkansas and coasted for a little while until the public really started demanding a Wright fight. But instead "Bad Intentions" has stepped right up and done the same thing **Shane Mosley** and **Felix Trinidad** quickly regretted: He's chosen to give the hard-to-crack southpaw a chance. Whether he'll join the "what were we thinking?" club will become clear soon enough.

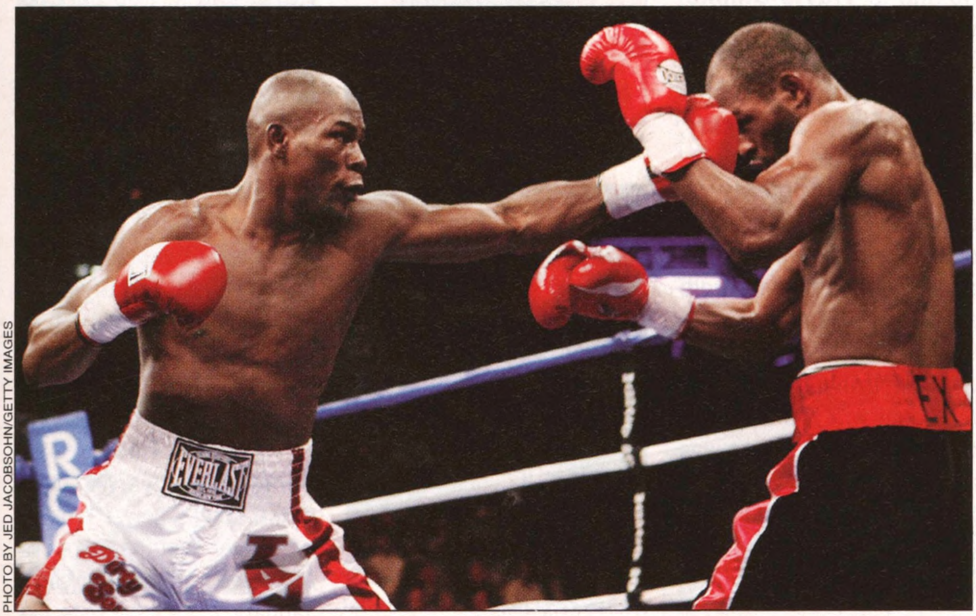


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Taylor's repeat win over Hopkins was another lackluster affair

MIDDLEWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Kelly Pavlik

Best Boxer
Winky Wright

Most Protected
Daniel Dawson

Is He Still Around?
Tony Marshall

Matchmaker's Dream
Jermain Taylor-Winky Wright

Deserves A Title Shot
Winky Wright

Most Fun To Watch
Sam Soliman

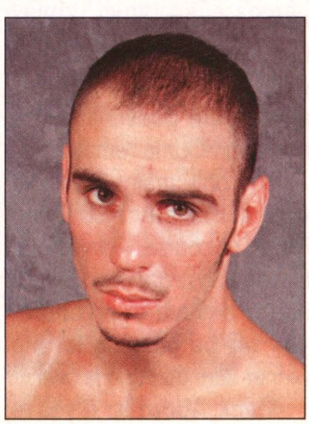
On The Way Down
Howard Eastman

Underrated
David Lopez

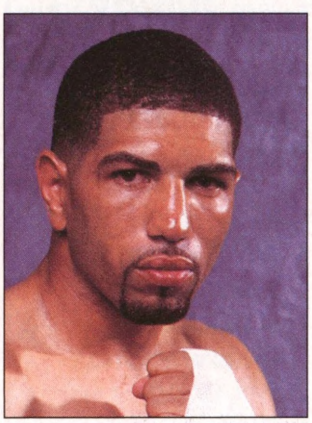
Overrated
Andre Ward

Best Fight In 2005
Ike Quartey W 10 Verno Phillips

Arthur Abraham



Kelly Pavlik



Winky Wright

Though Taylor seems a relatively young champion at 27 (especially compared to the graybeard who preceded him), there are actually plenty of even younger contenders at middleweight who show promise. Germany-based Armenian **Arthur Abraham** (25) has blasted his way through several legitimate contenders in the last two years; native German **Felix Sturm** (five months younger than Taylor at 27) is on a fine roll himself since nearly upsetting Oscar De La Hoya in '04; **Sebastian Sylvester** (25) is yet another German with potential; American **Kelly Pavlik** (23) is making the transition from prospect to contender and has the one-punch power to become a champion; and nobody comes close to **Sergio Mora** (25) when it comes to exposure and name recognition, as "The Latin Snake" won *The Contender* championship in front of a viewing audience of millions.

But the first crack goes to Wright, the new "old man" of the division at 34 now that Hopkins has announced his move up to light heavy. How much respect has Wright earned in the last few years? He figures to be a solid betting favorite over the undefeated champion seven years his junior.

Think About It: It seems obvious to compare Taylor with Sugar Ray Leonard, considering that both were U.S. Olympians who won their middleweight titles from long-reigning legends by building early leads and hanging on to win controversial decisions. But their commitments to the 160-pound division are obviously quite different. Leonard didn't make a single defense after dethroning Marvin Hagler, moving right up to 165 pounds for his next fight. Taylor has already defended against the man he took the title from and will now be taking on his top contender. Whatever happens in Taylor-Wright, you have to give the kid credit for doing right by boxing's number-two "glamour" division—unlike Sugar

Ray, who abdicated and paved the road for the middleweight alphabet madness that took nearly 15 years to fix.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

There are really two junior middleweight divisions: the one you see when you look at THE RING ratings on page 18 of this magazine, and the one that you see when you look beyond the ratings. Looking only at the rated fighters, this is a division with modest-at-best star power. The top three include two virtually anonymous beltholders (**Roman Karmazin** and **Sergej Dzinkziruk**), and one fighter who falls somewhere in between anonymity and superstardom (**Kassim Ouma**). The only two big names rated in the top 10 are slightly farther down the list—**Fernando Vargas** and **Ike Quartey**.

But the division shapes up entirely differently if you widen your scope to include a few unrated fighters. **Oscar De La Hoya** is a junior middleweight and is still the biggest star in boxing, but he isn't ranked because he's been inactive for more than a year-and-a-half and he hasn't fought at 154 for more than 2½ years. **Ricardo Mayorga**, who is slated to defend his alphabet trinket against Oscar shortly after this issue hits the newsstands, simply hasn't done enough at junior middle to get rated (which tells you a thing or two about what it takes to win an alphabet title these days). The same goes for **Vernon Forrest**—like Mayorga, a former undisputed welterweight champ—who is slowly and not-too-surely trying to battle back from injury problems. Then there's **Shane Mosley**, who says he's going back to welter, but based on his recent TKO of Vargas, could certainly be a factor here if he wanted to. And one more unrated fighter worth mentioning is **Travis Simms**, whose middle initial ought to be "T," because his 19-month inactivity due to boxing politics is a *travesty*, plain and simple.

There was plenty of uncertainty hanging over the division as we went to press, as several top fighters were still trying to figure out whom their next opponents would be. Karmazin seemed close to a deal with **Daniel Santos**, but **Rodney Jones** was also a possibility, and the Russian was showing interest in a fight with Quartey. Meanwhile, Quartey, whose planned fight with Forrest fell apart, seemed to be inching toward a possible HBO bout with Ouma. And there's always the possibility of a Karmazin-Ouma rematch.

The only major fight that was set in stone, barring injury, of course, was De La Hoya-Mayorga. And you'd better believe everyone at 154 will be gunning for the winner after that one is over.

Think About It: If you're into interesting numerical patterns, you probably noticed that every time Vargas loses, it takes him one less round than it did the time before. First there was the 12th-round TKO to Felix Trinidad; then there was the 11th-round TKO to De La Hoya; and in February he lost by 10th-round TKO to Mosley. Considering the favorable odds you can usually get betting on a specific round, it seems a wise investment to lay a few bucks on Vargas' opponent in the ninth the next time "El Feroz" takes a dangerous fight.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Alejandro Garcia

Best Boxer
Kassim Ouma

Most Protected
Sergio Martinez

Is He Still Around?
Keith Holmes

Matchmaker's Dream
Oscar De La Hoya-Fernando Vargas II

Deserves A Title Shot
Kassim Ouma

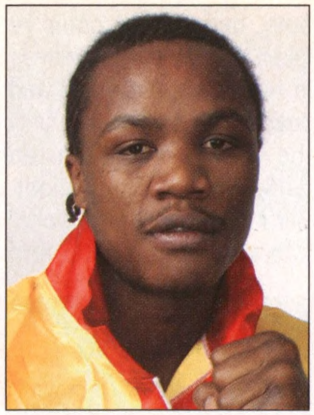
Most Fun To Watch
Fernando Vargas

On The Way Down
Teddy Reid

Underrated
Rodney Jones

Overrated
Joshua Clottey

Best Fight In 2005
Sechew Powell KO 1 Cornelius Bundrage



Kassim Ouma

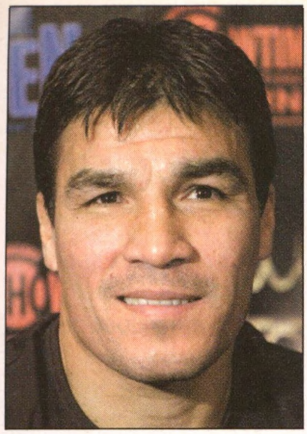
Roman Karmazin

Fernando Vargas

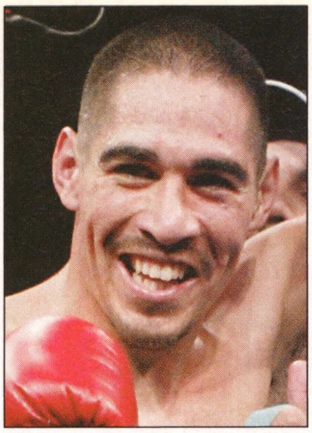
WELTERWEIGHT

Ah, to be **Carlos Baldomir**. On January 6, most of the sport's power brokers had never even heard of this Argentine veteran. But since January 7, he's become the most wanted man in boxing—and we mean that in a very good way. His record may be a less-than-stellar 42-9-6 (12), but that 42nd win netted him the universally recognized welterweight championship of the world, and now even the *American Idol* voting lines aren't as consistently tied up as his phone is.

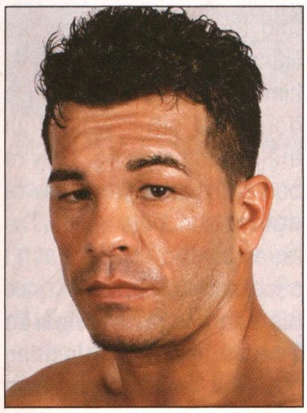
When you're a real champ who's generally viewed as a mediocre fighter, potential opponents put you on speed dial. After winning the title, Baldomir courted offers from **Arturo Gatti** (that's the fight that appears to be happening), junior welter champ **Ricky Hatton**, and even the guy who used to hold the title of "the fighter everybody dreams of fighting," **Oscar De La Hoya**. When "The Golden Boy" is offering you a package to fight on his undercard in May and then



Carlos Baldomir



Antonio Margarito



Arturo Gatti

WELTERWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Antonio Margarito

Best Boxer
Floyd Mayweather

Most Protected
Kevin Anderson

Is He Still Around?
Vince Phillips

Matchmaker's Dream
Carlos Baldomir-Arturo Gatti

Deserves A Title Shot
Antonio Margarito

Most Fun To Watch
Arturo Gatti

On The Way Down
Cosme Rivera

Underrated
Marteze Logan

Overrated
Cory Spinks

Best Fight In 2005
Luis Collazo W 12
Jose Antonio Rivera

meet him in September, you know you've hit the lottery.

But Baldomir didn't hit the lottery through sheer luck; he hit it by hitting **Zab Judah**, scoring what will almost certainly hold up at the end of '06 as the Upset of the Year. Meanwhile Judah has seen a planned $3-million payday turn into a $1-million payday when he takes on **Floyd Mayweather** on April 8. If Mayweather has won that one by the time you read this, there's a chance he'll face **Antonio Margarito** over the summer. And while Baldomir controls the title at the moment, a Margarito-Mayweather winner would generally be viewed by the public as the best fighter in the division (though **Shane Mosley**, fresh off his win over Fernando Vargas and possibly intending to return to welterweight, might have something to say about that).

Needless to say, there's a lot happening at 147 pounds. And the future looks just as interesting as the present. Colombian bomber **Joel Julio** is regarded by many as the brightest young prospect in the sport, and **Alfonso Gomez** has skyrocketed to fame after faring rather well as a welterweight fighting middleweights on *The Contender*. Plus Season Two of *The Contender* will zero in on the welterweight division, meaning there will be no shortage of household names at 147 a few months from now.

Think About It: Some would say Daniel Santos is the one thing messing with Margarito's mojo in recent years—after all, Margarito's only two non-wins since 1996, a no-contest and a technical-decision loss, came against Santos. But you could look at it a different way and say that Santos is the best thing to happen to Margarito, as "Tono" always comes through with breakthrough knockout wins after clashing with Santos. After the first Santos bout, Margarito immediately made the leap to the next level by disposing of Antonio Diaz and Andrew "Six Heads" Lewis. Since the Santos rematch, Margarito's gone on a tear against **Sebastian Lujan**, **Kermit Cintron**, and **Manuel Gomez**. Our recommendation is that Margarito fight Santos every three years or so, because win,

LONGEST REIGNING TITLISTS

The graph below illustrates the game's most established titlists (Ring, WBC, WBA, or IBF), along with the number of consecutive months each has held the title. Incredibly, five of last year's top seven—Bernard Hopkins, Kostya Tszyu, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Yodsanan Nanthachai, and Oscar Larios—are gone, and the fact that two beltholders with tenures lasting under two years have made this year's list tells you just how short many of the recent reigns have been. However, if we included the WBO (we never have before, so why start now?), this list wouldn't look quite so pathetic, as Joe Calzaghe's 100-month reign would top them all.

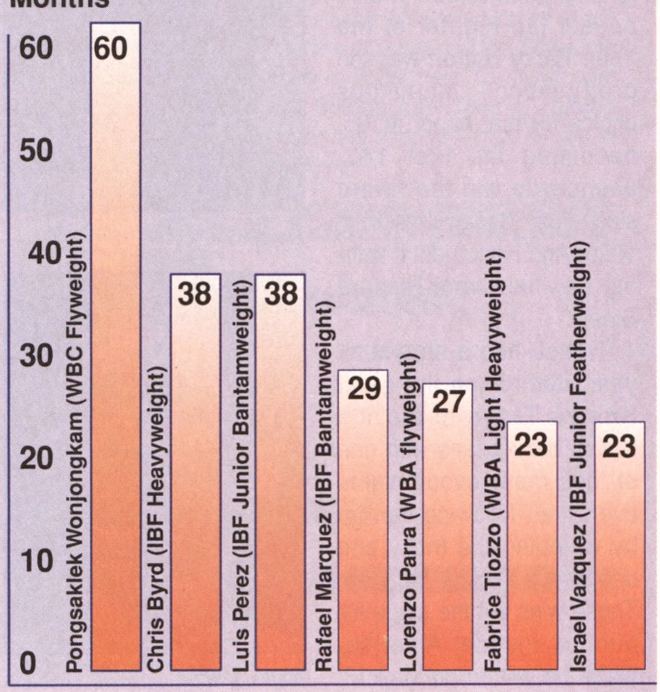


PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESY/GETTY IMAGES

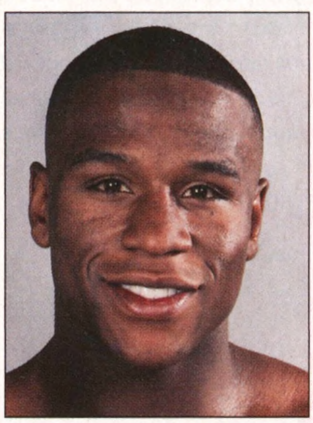
Hatton shoots a jab at Maussa in first defense of world 140-pound title

lose, draw, or no-contest, it seems to kick start his momentum.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

As if this weight class hasn't been getting enough acclaim in recent years, with its extraordinary depth and its tendency to always have a pound-for-pounder or two lurking around, now it also boasts the Fighter of the Year. **Ricky Hatton** was the pretty-much unanimous choice for that honor in '05, becoming the first 140-pounder to win the award since Julio Cesar Chavez in 1990. And Hatton did it without any help from Richard Steele.

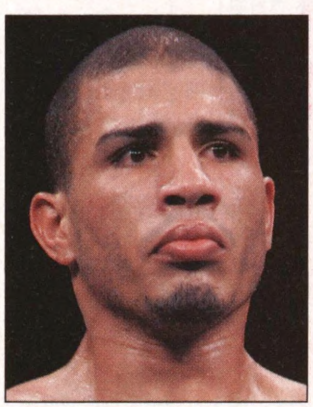
Hatton had a storybook year, dethroning the great **Kostya Tszyu** to provide British boxing fans with one of their most joyous nights ever, then following that up by whipping the tricky and dangerous **Carlos Maussa**. Those wins set the stage for him to invade America, which he will do on May 13. The question as of our press deadline was who would be in the opposite corner. All we know for sure is that it won't be any of the junior welterweights we'd really like to see him against: **Floyd Mayweather**, **Miguel Cotto**, or **Jose Luis Castillo**.



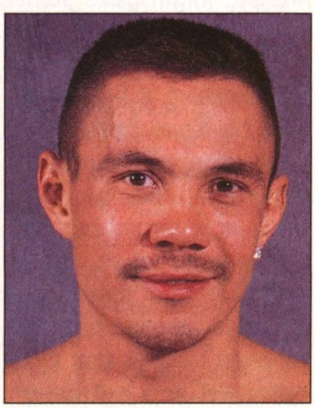
Floyd Mayweather

Speaking of Mayweather, you may have noticed that we named him "Best Boxer" in both this division and the 147-pound class. The reason is that he appears to be active in both (fighting recently at welter, while holding on to an alphabet belt at junior welter), and there's no rule against competing in two divisions at once. And whatever division "Pretty Boy" is in, he's the "Best Boxer" by a landslide.

But sources in the know say a Hatton-Mayweather showdown isn't on the radar screen, and with Castillo and Cotto both set for June bouts, Hatton will basically be doing little in May other than showcasing his talents for American audiences. But at least he's fighting. The same cannot be said of his rival Tszyu, who seems to have one foot out the door ... and the other foot dancing with the stars.



Miguel Cotto



Kostya Tszyu

Think About It: Sometimes, when a fighter has chin issues, his manager and promoter live in denial, putting the guy in dangerous fights to prove he can handle himself. Cotto's handlers are going the other way. With their matchmaking, they're basically admitting they're worried about his beard. The level of opposition hasn't necessarily dropped off since his scare against **Ricardo Torres**, but the punching power of the opposition sure

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Miguel Cotto

Best Boxer
Floyd Mayweather

Most Protected
Dave Stewart

Is He Still Around?
Victor Hugo Paz

Matchmaker's Dream
Ricky Hatton-
Floyd Mayweather

Deserves A Title Shot
Floyd Mayweather

Most Fun To Watch
Miguel Cotto

On The Way Down
Kostya Tszyu

Underrated
Emanuel Augustus

Overrated
Naoufel Ben Rabah

Best Fight In 2005
Miguel Cotto KO 7
Ricardo Torres

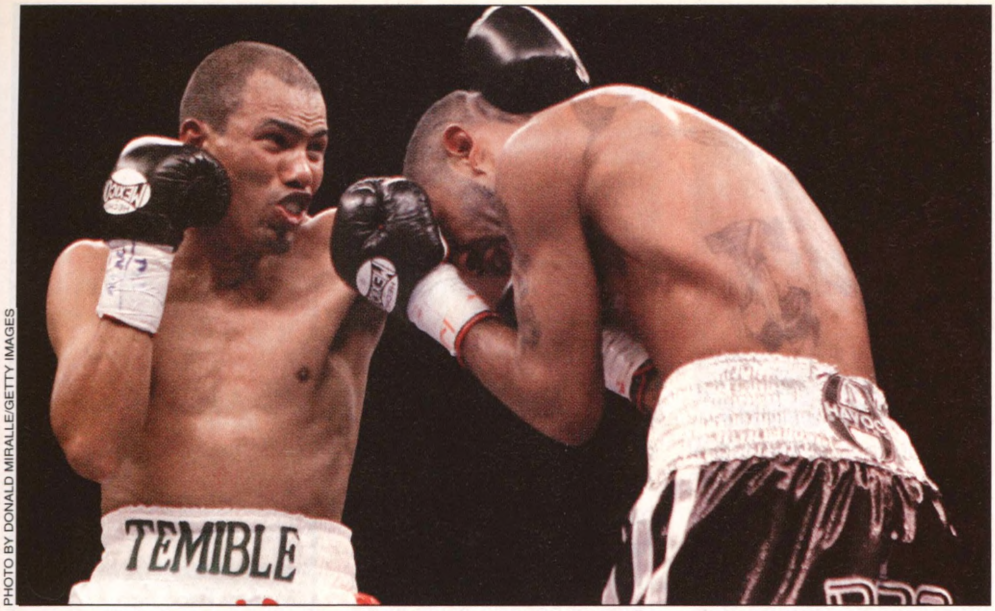


PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Castillo and Corrales are scheduled for a rubber match at 135 pounds

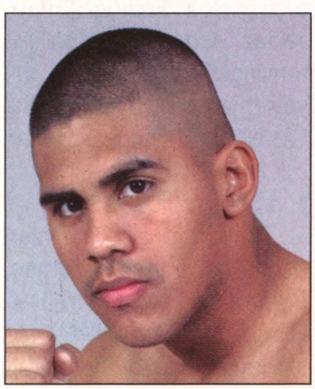
has. **Gianluca Branco** has only 19 knockouts in 39 fights, most of them against weak opposition in Italy, and **Paul Malignaggi**, whom Cotto is slated to face in June, has just five stoppages in 21 bouts. We're not going to hold our breath for the Cotto-Torres rematch.

LIGHTWEIGHT

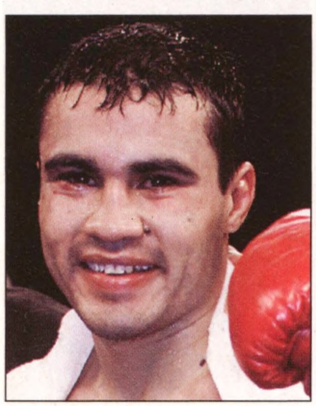
Perhaps the best way to sum up the first **Jose Luis Castillo-Diego Corrales** fight is to use the old cliché, "Good things come to those who wait." As boxing fans, we suffer through a lot of crap, and nights like that make it all worthwhile.

Perhaps the best way to sum up the second Castillo-Corrales fight is to say, "Bad things come to those who *make weight*." Corrales got down to 135 pounds, Castillo didn't come close, and "Chico" paid the price for abiding by the rules.

With a rubber match set for June 3 on Showtime, the question now is will Corrales suffer for choosing not to *wait* longer for this fight, or will Castillo suffer for attempting to make *weight* as a 135-pounder when his body is obviously begging him to leave the division? There is plenty of intrigue entering this fight that will presumably end the thrilling and controversial Castillo-Corrales saga, and the future of the division hinges on the outcome. If Castillo wins, he's definitely moving up to 140 and leaving a fractured championship behind. If Corrales wins, he may move up to junior welter, or he may stick around and look for a



Juan Diaz



Jesus Chavez

LIGHTWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Diego Corrales

Best Boxer
Zahir Raheem

Most Protected
Juan Carlos Diaz Melero

Is He Still Around?
Cesar Soto

Matchmaker's Dream
Diego Corrales-
Jose Luis Castillo III

Deserves A Title Shot
Jose Luis Castillo

Most Fun To Watch
Diego Corrales

On The Way Down
Juan Carlos Ramirez

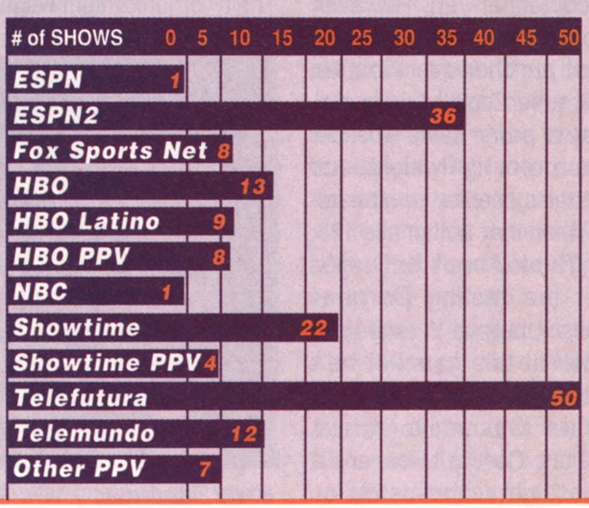
Underrated
Lakva Sim

Overrated
Matt Zegan

Best Fight In 2005
Diego Corrales KO 10
Jose Luis Castillo

BOXING on TV

Here's a slightly bothersome trend: Most of the networks aired less live boxing in 2005 than they did in 2004, resulting in a dip from 200 total shows to 171. And here's another bothersome trend to compound it: The number of total pay-per-view shows went up from 12 in '04 to 19 in '05, meaning it cost boxing fans in the neighborhood of $750 on top of their regular cable bills to watch all of the fights. The good news: In the early stages of '06, Showtime and HBO are both on pace to better their '05 marks, and while HBO Latino is out,* Boxing After Dark *is coming back. Let's hope this graph has happier things to say in next year's "State Of The Game."



new lightweight rival to make a bundle of money with.

If that's the case, Corrales shouldn't have to look far, as there's no shortage of name fighters populating the lightweight ranks right now. Veteran **Joel Casamayor** has split two fights with Corrales and lost a nip-and-tuck affair against Castillo. **Jesus Chavez** and **Marco Antonio Barrera** (whose postponed fight may be rescheduled for later in '06) are both attractive challengers. Same with whoever wins the highly intriguing April bout between puncher **Acelino Freitas** and boxer **Zahir Raheem**. And don't forget **Julio Diaz** and **Juan Diaz**, two entertaining young contenders with no shortage of heart. As long as all the other top guys in this division are fighting each other, we wouldn't mind a Diaz vs. Diaz dukeout to help clear up the picture.

A couple of clarifications on some choices in the sidebar for this division: Castillo is ranked by THE RING at 140 pounds, but we gave him consideration for some categories here, since he is deserving of a title shot at 135 (having kayoed the champ in October) but not at 140 (where he hasn't fought a contender yet). However, we went with Corrales as the best puncher over Castillo, because Castillo's big display of power came when he was not a lightweight, and Corrales seemed to hit harder when they both made 135.

Think About It: Do you get the feeling Corrales doesn't believe in tune-ups? Look at this gauntlet he's attempted to run in last 2½ years: Casamayor twice, Freitas, Castillo twice, and a third fight with Castillo on tap. That'll make six straight fights against pound-for-pound types without a single breather. Even if Corrales loses the Castillo rubber match and ends up 3-3 in this stretch, that would have to go down as the hardest-earned .500 record in history.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT

If you look at the top of THE RING rankings at 130 pounds, you might think this is one of boxing's current glamour divisions. Those first three names—**Manny Pacquiao**, **Marco Antonio Barrera**, and **Erik Morales**—are all future Hall of Famers, all superstars who've sold better on pay-per-view than junior lightweights are supposed to be able to dream of selling. So on paper, this is a hot division.

But it threatens to be quite the opposite very soon.

Barrera is toying with moving to lightweight. Morales not only appears to be fading fast as a fighter, but he also is claiming he can't make 130 anymore and is trying to negotiate to fight Pacquiao at 132. So depending on which way the wind blows, instead of the Holy Trinity of junior lightweights, we could be left with Pacquiao making like Billy Idol and dancing with himself—at least until the next round of featherweights move up. (Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez II, anyone?)

Looking strictly at who's currently in the division, though, it's a fairly average group from number four on down, with the most interesting element being the number of nationalities represented. Panama's **Vicente Mosquera** has ability, but is totally anonymous in the U.S. and isn't helping himself with a string of non-title bouts in his homeland. **Yodsanan Nanthachai** of Thailand could be headed for a fight with Australia's **Robbie Peden**. Wacky Argentine **Jorge Barrios** was slated to face Hungary's **Janos Nagy** as we went to press. They don't come much more battle-tested (and hard-luck) than California-based, El Salvador-bred **Carlos "Famoso" Hernandez**. And rounding out the rankings is **Alex Arthur**, the young lad from Scotland who has a lot of the tools to go far, but may lack the necessary punch resistance.

Think About It: One interesting thing that Pacquiao, Barrera, and Morales all have in common: They've all been top runners-up for THE RING'S Fighter of the Year award, but none has ever won it. Pacquiao was the runner-up to James Toney in '03 (the year in which Pac-Man beat Barrera). If not for Glen Johnson, Barrera would have been Fighter of the Year in '04 (the year in which he upset Morales in their third fight), and he also was probably number two in '01 behind Bernard Hopkins (the year in

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Manny Pacquiao

Best Boxer
Marco Antonio Barrera

Most Protected
Sergio Palomo

Is He Still Around?
Antonio Cermeno

Matchmaker's Dream
Manny Pacquiao-
Marco Antonio Barrera II

Deserves A Title Shot
Manny Pacquiao

Most Fun To Watch
Manny Pacquiao

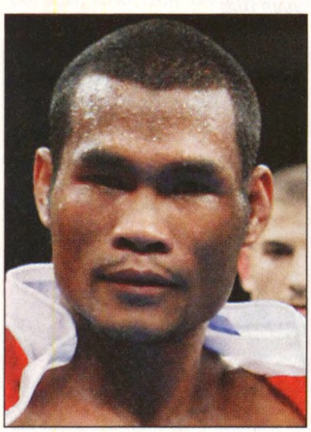
On The Way Down
Erik Morales

Underrated
Carlos Hernandez

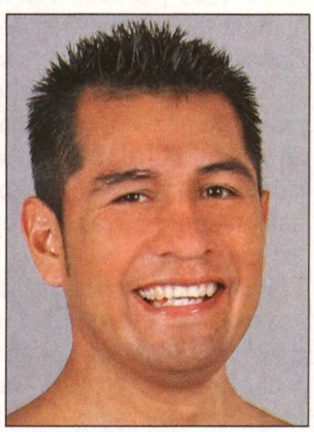
Overrated
Robbie Peden

Best Fight In 2005
Erik Morales W 12
Manny Pacquiao

Manny Pacquiao

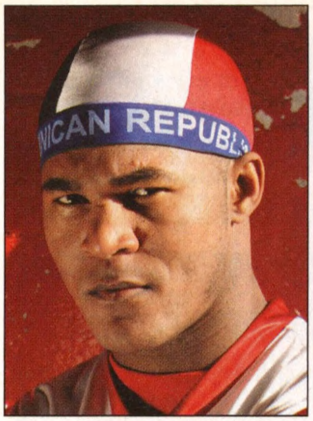


Yodsanan Nanthachai

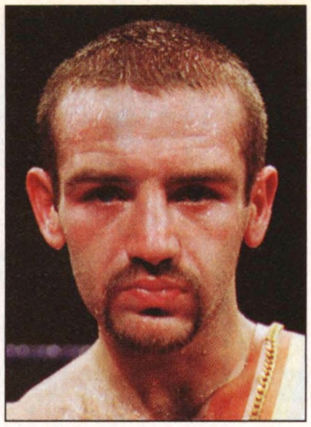


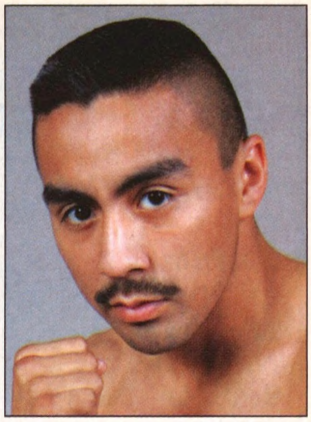
Marco Antonio Barrera

which Barrera beat Naseem Hamed). And way back in '99, the year in which Paulie Ayala was named Fighter of the Year, Morales was one of a handful of fighters under strong consideration, having gone 4-0 with three knockouts and a win over Wayne McCullough. Perhaps that always-a-bridesmaid-never-a-bride thing will change in '06, with Pacquiao an early frontrunner on the strength of his kayo of Morales.



Joan Guzman


Scott Harrison


Rocky Juarez

FEATHERWEIGHT

David Caruso leaving *NYPD Blue*. Michael Jordan playing baseball. Howard Dean yelling out the names of all 50 states. Well, we can add a new one to the list of all-time disastrous career moves: **Juan Manuel Marquez** going to Indonesia to fight **Chris John** for a lousy $31,250.

Actually, Marquez' self-inflicted career crippling can more directly be traced to his passing on a rematch with Manny Pacquiao in early-'05, setting off a chain of events that would lead to him going into the toilet against John. Marquez and manager Nacho Beristain made just about every wrong decision possible in the last year-and-a-half, and the end result was Marquez losing a fight he never should have been in and losing recognition as the world's top featherweight. The one good thing that may come out of this: Maybe he'll lose his attachment to the 126-pound division and finally move on up to 130, where the big boys and big opportunities await (as long as Marquez and Beristain have a realistic understanding of how much money they can demand).

If and when Marquez leaves, this division, which was so full of superstars over most of the past 10 years, will definitely be one of boxing's least marketable. Fighters with alphabet belts include John, seemingly a first-rate fighter but one whom American audiences have never seen; **Takashi Koshimoto**, who gets the exact same description as John; and **Valdemir Pereira**, who is undefeated and shows potential, but who hasn't even done enough yet to be rated by THE RING. The winner of the rescheduled May match between **Scott Harrison** and **Joan Guzman** will probably be the most marketable strapholder, but that said, neither of those two exciting featherweights is one-tenth as well known as names like Hamed, Barrera, and Pacquiao were.

The biggest names in the division remain those who've lost recently: Marquez, **Rocky Juarez**, and **Injin Chi**. Juarez is certainly a guy capable of pulling in some ratings on HBO, with his exciting style and Olympic pedigree. The question that remains is whether he's a good enough fighter to make it matter.

Think About It: Every now and then, you still hear some bozo tell you boxing needs the alphabet groups, and they'll often cite Jose Sulaiman's efforts to improve fighter safety and his charitable donations. And we'll cite in return the Koshimoto-Chi fight as yet another example of how the WBC is hurting boxing. We'd said for years that the Mexico-based alphabet group's inane headbutt rule was going to cost someone a big fight one of these days, and one of these days has arrived. In accordance with the rule, Chi was penalized a point because heads clashed and his didn't bleed, and wouldn't you know, he lost the fight by a single point, when he should have retained his belt on a draw. What ever would we do without Sulaiman helping out our sport?

FEATHERWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Rocky Juarez

Best Boxer
Chris John

Most Protected
Spend Abazi

Is He Still Around?
Vuyani Bungu

Matchmaker's Dream
Rocky Juarez-
Scott Harrison

Deserves A Title Shot
Humberto Soto

Most Fun To Watch
Scott Harrison

On The Way Down
Joe Morales

Underrated
Gamaliel Diaz

Overrated
Valdemir Pereira

Best Fight In 2005
Humberto Soto W 12
Rocky Juarez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

The 122-pound class has never been called a glamour division, but interestingly, the superstars who have made the 126-pound and 130-pound classes glamorous in recent years—Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Manny Pacquiao—all first rose to fame at 122. In the current junior featherweight division, as has been the case throughout much of the division's history, there are no superstars. But there is one fighter who is starting to make us think he, like Barrera, Morales, and Pacquiao, might eventually grow into one.

Israel Vazquez is the champion of the division, having stopped **Oscar Larios**, at the time as the supreme fighter at the weight. Vazquez is reason-

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Daniel Ponce DeLeon

Best Boxer
Israel Vazquez

Most Protected
Wethya Sakmuangklang

Is He Still Around?
Danny Romero

Matchmaker's Dream
Israel Vazquez-
Rafael Marquez

Deserves A Title Shot
Mahyar Monshipour

Most Fun To Watch
Israel Vazquez

On The Way Down
Julio Zarate

Underrated
Celestino Caballero

Overrated
Rikiya Fukuhara

Best Fight In 2005
Oscar Larios W 12
Wayne McCullough

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Vazquez won **The Ring** *'s vacant junior feather belt by stopping Larios*

ably young (28). He makes entertaining fights. He can box, and he can punch. He's constantly improving under the tutelage of Freddie Roach. And he's developed a reputation as both a totally engaging person and a fabulously disciplined worker. Add it all up and Vazquez seems to have the makings of a star, at least by little-guy standards.

The same cannot be said for too many of his contenders. The upper echelon of the rankings were dramatically reshuffled in March when Thailand's **Somsak Sithchatchawal** upset WBA titlist **Mayhar Monshipor** via 10th-round knockout. Monshipor, who was making his sixth defense of the alphabet title, announced his retirement immediately after the unexpected loss. Larios seemed to give in a little bit too easily for our tastes in his recent bout with Vazquez and is probably beginning the downhill slide. **Celestino Caballero** of Panama is clever inside the ropes, but not terribly compelling.

And they get decidedly more anonymous after that, with one little-known foreign fighter after another filling the rankings. (No big surprise there; how many truly great American junior featherweights have there ever been?) If there's one other guy you've seen fight on TV, it's **Daniel Ponce De-Leon**, but to have seen him fight is to know how crude and limited he is. Though young and heavy-handed, Ponce just doesn't have the skills to compete at the higher levels—and now that he's trying to improve those skills, he's really beginning to bore us.

Think About It: In most trilogies, the second fight is the least memorable; in Vasquez-Larios, the second fight was the great one, sandwiched in between a pair of blowouts. Think about Ali-Frazier, Gatti-Ward, and Barrera-Morales—in all three cases, the first and third fights were classics, the middle bouts relatively mediocre. But with Vazquez and Larios, they defied convention and had a scintillating second fight back in May of 2002. Their first fight was over in one round and their disappointing rubber match lasted just three (and had an anticlimactic ending), but Larios-Vazquez II was a sensational centerpiece of this inside-out trilogy.

Somsak Sithchatchawal

Rafael Marquez

BANTAMWEIGHT

Last year, "State of the Game" author Don Stradley went out on a limb and called for a fight between **Rafael Marquez**—then ranked number one by THE RING—and **Jhonny Gonzalez**—ranked just number 10 at the time. Stradley was somewhat of a visionary, because a year later, that fight, which nobody else was talking about at the time, is far and away the most attractive matchup at 118 pounds.

Marquez is still ranked number one, having completed a fairly inactive year under the questionable guidance of manager/trainer Nacho Beristain. He decisioned **Ricardo Vargas** last May, then scored an impressive TKO of unbeaten **Silence Mabuza** in October, but had no follow-up fight lined up as of press time. Gonzalez, meanwhile, has zoomed from 10th in the ratings to fourth, having fought five times in '05 and once already in '06. His '05 performances were all on either HBO Latino or Telefutura, but he reached

BANTAMWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Rafael Marquez

Best Boxer
Rafael Marquez

Most Protected
Martin Power

Is He Still Around?
Chatchai Sasakul

Matchmaker's Dream
Rafael Marquez-Jhonny Gonzalez

Deserves A Title Shot
Genaro Garcia

Most Fun To Watch
Jhonny Gonzalez

On The Way Down
Mauricio Pastrana

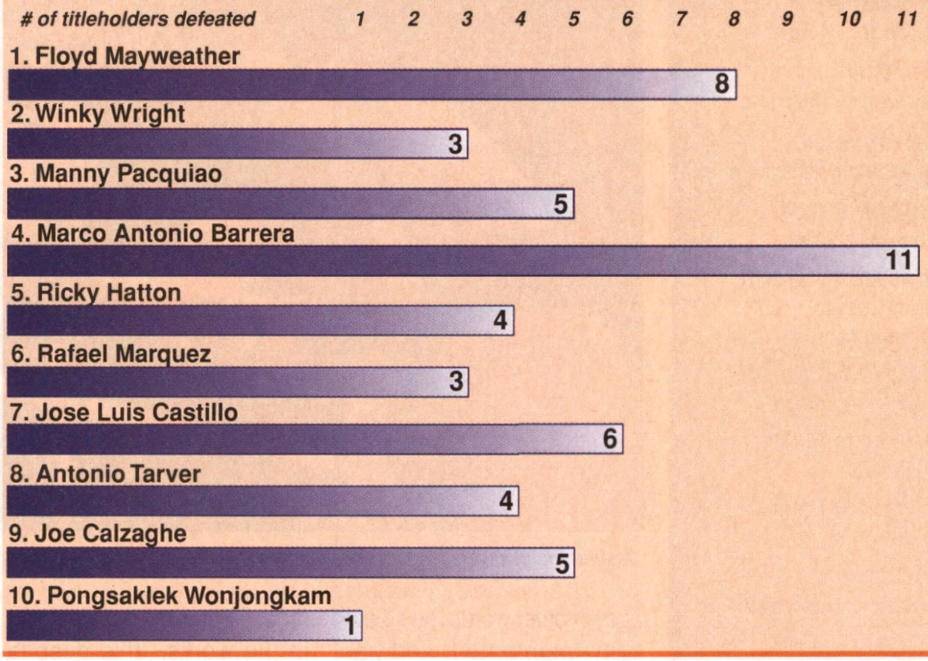
Underrated
Ricardo Cordoba

Overrated
Mauricio Martinez

Best Fight In 2005
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 3 William Gonzalez

TITLISTS vs. TITLISTS

One of the ways to calculate a fighter's worth is to count the number of champions or titlists he's defeated. Here's how THE RING's pound-for-pound top 10 stack up:

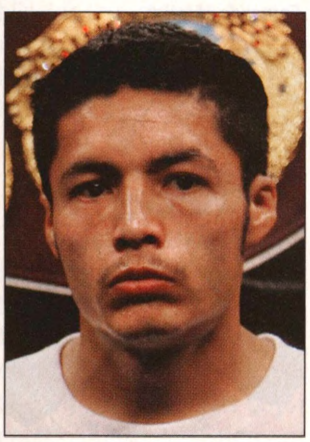


English-speaking audiences this past February when he stopped faded potential Hall of Famer **Mark Johnson** on the Shane Mosley-Fernando Vargas PPV undercard. The time for Marquez-Gonzalez has come, though it's anybody's guess whether Beristain realizes that.

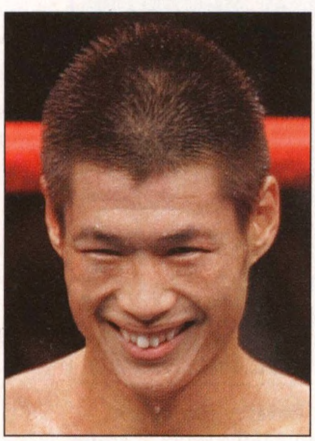
Elsewhere in the division, **Hozumi Hasegawa** of Japan was preparing as we went to press to defend his alphabet strap against the man he upset for the title last April, **Veerapol Sahaprom**. The winner there would also become a logical opponent for Marquez, if not for the fact that it's been a decade since that belt has ventured outside Asia, a trend that seems unlikely to suddenly change.

The rest of the rankings include fading veterans **Cruz Carvajal** and **Ratanachai Vorapin**, Marquez victims Mabuza and Vargas, and two-time Marquez conqueror **Genaro Garcia**, who is long overdue for a meaningful fight. Rounding out the ratings is the lone undefeated fighter in the top 10, **Wladimir Sidorenko**, a light-punching but highly skilled Germany-based Ukrainian.

Think About It: Regardless of whether Veerapol has or has not reclaimed his WBC belt by the time you read this, his lengthy reign was numerically staggering. It was a throwback to the old days, when champions kept extremely busy with non-title fights. In a six-year, five-month title tenure, the Thai fought 29 times, including 14 successful defenses, 14 non-title bouts, and finally his failed defense against Hasegawa. In classic Veerapol fashion, in the 11 months between his fights with Hasegawa, he fought five tune-ups. Two more things worth noting: If just a few of those non-title bouts had been sanctioned as title fights instead, Veerapol would have broken Orlando Canizales' division record of 16 defenses; and it's hard to find two reigns more dissimilar than Veerapol's WBC reign and his WBA bantamweight reign that preceded it by a few years. That one lasted just four months, ending in the Thai's first defense.



Jhonny Gonzalez



Hozumi Hasegawa

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT

Seventeen different times over the course of "The State Of The Game," we single out fighters we consider "Underrated." But only once will we single out an entire division we consider underrated: The junior bantams are boxing's most underrated division at the moment, with plenty of outstanding talent stuck in a weight class that only the most hardcore of fans care about.

At the top of the division—arguably, anyway, since the top five guys all seem relatively closely matched—is **Martin Castillo**, who narrowly won an exciting scrap with **Alexander Munoz** on the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales II PPV undercard in January. Castillo

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Alexander Munoz

Best Boxer
Masamori Tokuyama

Most Protected
Duangpetch Saengmorakot

Is He Still Around?
Gerry Penalosa

Matchmaker's Dream
Martin Castillo-
Fernando Montiel

Deserves A Title Shot
Alexander Munoz

Most Fun To Watch
Luis Perez

On The Way Down
Jair Jimenez

Underrated
Masamori Tokuyama

Overrated
Nonito Donaire

Best Fight In 2005
Katsushige Kawashima
W 12 Jose Navarro

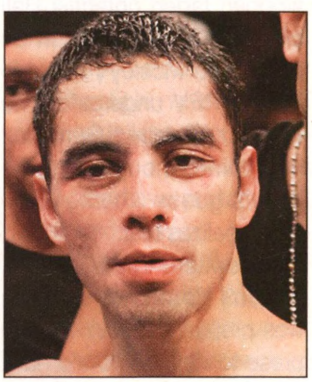
PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Castillo (right) kept his number-one contender status with close decision over Munoz

can punch a little and box a lot, and the only loss on the Mexican's record remains a bogus technical decision loss to Felix Machado four years ago. In other words, he's basically undefeated, and has become a favorite of the hardcore fans.

And the guy the hardcore fans want to see him fight is countryman **Fernando Montiel**, a slickster who has climbed back up the rankings since an upset loss to Mark Johnson a couple of years ago. Good news, hardcore fans: That fight is reportedly in the works—this despite the fact that it would require Top Rank and Golden Boy to work together.

But Mexico doesn't have a monopoly on top junior bantams. In Japan, there's super-skillful **Masamori Tokuyama** (see the "Think About It" section for more on him). In Venezuela, there's Munoz, whose only two losses have come against Castillo, the more recent one being determined by the slimmest of margins. In America, there's 2000 Olympian **Jose Navarro**, who lost to Tokuyama in

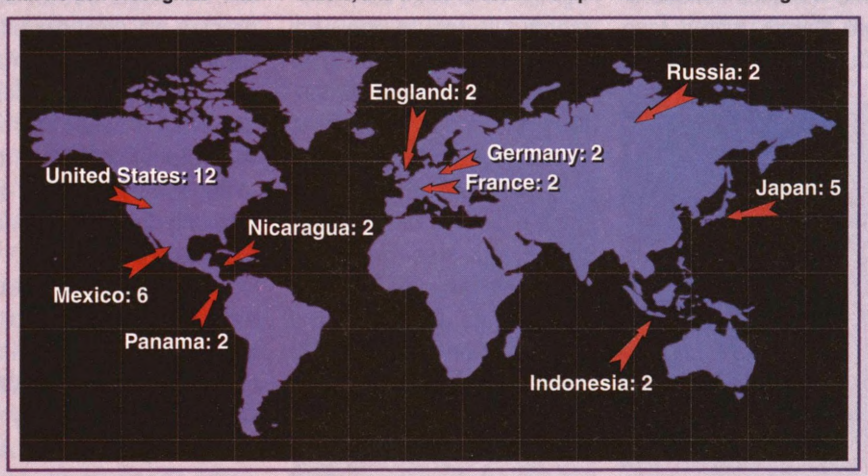


Fernando Montiel

Masamori Tokuyama

THE CHAMPS AND TITLISTS BY COUNTRIES

If you're all about patriotism and rooting for the good ol' U.S. of A. to do well, then it probably doesn't thrill you to see that just 12 of the 46 fighters who call themselves beltholders are Americans. But if it's real titles you care about, the legit championships awarded by THE RING, then the news is better for Americans, as four of the eights champs (50 percent) call the States home. Here's a complete country-by-country breakdown. Note that we don't recognize "interim" titlists, and we don't count multiple WBA titlists in a single division.



9 countries tied with 1: Argentina • Australia • Brazil • Denmark • Poland • Thailand • Ukraine • Venezuela • Wales

February but still has to be considered a threat to any of the top guys. And in Nicaragua—somewhere in Nicaragua far off Don King's radar, apparently—there's **Luis Perez**, the sport's most inactive titleholder and best example of how not to promote an exciting little fighter. Perez has fought exactly once in the last 2½ years, that an off-TV win over Luis Bolano in April '05. What an absolute shame.

Think About It: Tokuyama probably seems an odd choice for the "Underrated" designation in this division, considering that we rate him number two in the world. But here's why we think he's underrated: because of the nature of his lone recent defeat, a first-round kayo that sure looks like a fluke in retrospect. Before that, Tokuyama was a dominant titlist who made eight defenses, and since the loss, he's avenged it, regained his title, and turned away Navarro conclusively. Yet you don't hear the hardcore types asking for him to come to America and unify belts with Castillo or Montiel or Perez, the way they do with most long-reigning Asian beltholders. That first-round knockout loss really looks like an insignificant blip for this master boxer. But in the eyes of most, he hasn't gotten back to where he was yet.

FLYWEIGHT

ShoBox analyst Steve Farhood said it perfectly in the moments following **Vic Darchinyan's** March knockout of **Diosdado Gabi**: "It's a total myth that the little guys can't punch." Damned straight. There are excellent punchers with one-shot power in every division in boxing, and the current flyweight division boasts just as many heavy hitters, at least in a pound-for-pound sense, as the current heavyweight division does.

Darchinyan is the best banger in the bunch, a guy who appears very much outbox-able, but can end a fight at any given moment. Not far behind him, if at all, is **Jorge Arce**, a massive flyweight with a massive punch, as **Hussein Hussein** will surely attest. The top two fighters in the division, **Lorenzo Parra** and **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**, are both cut more from the boxer-puncher mold, but they each have enough knockouts on their record to strike fear into opponents. And very much in the mix are veterans **Irene Pacheco** and **Rosendo Alvarez**, both of whom can still hurt you at what would have to be considered advanced ages for 112-pounders.

Arce and Alvarez will have fought each other by the time you read this, and the winner figures to leap into the top four of the division, along with Pongsaklek, Parra, and Darchinyan. Talent-wise, that'll be just about as good a foursome as you'll find in any division in the sport right now (even if the star-status doesn't approach the talent). Any bouts between any two of them would be a treat.

And any bouts between any two of them could end inside the scheduled distance.

Think About It: Former light heavyweight champ Glen Johnson's "Road Warrior" nickname was well earned, but even he doesn't deserve that tag as much as Parra does. Parra's first 21 fights were all in his native Venezuela, but he's fought exclusively in his opponents' hometowns since, traveling all over the globe to prove his superiority. He won his belt from Eric Morel in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, then he went to Tokyo, Japan, to beat **Takefumi Sakata**, to Seoul, South Korea, to vanquish Yosam Choi, back to Tokyo to turn away both Trash Nakanuma and Sakata again, and then to Paris, France, to defeat **Brahim Asloum**. That's a "Road Warrior." And if that nickname doesn't seem original enough, how does Lorenzo "Passport" Parra strike you?

FLYWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Vic Darchinyan

Best Boxer
Lorenzo Parra

Most Protected
Alberto Rosas

Is He Still Around?
Domingo Guillen

Matchmaker's Dream
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam-Jorge Arce

Deserves A Title Shot
Takefumi Sakata

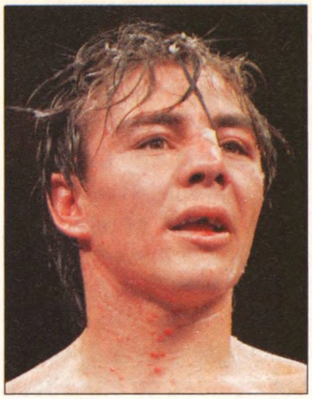
Most Fun To Watch
Jorge Arce

On The Way Down
Hussein Hussein

Underrated
Takefumi Sakata

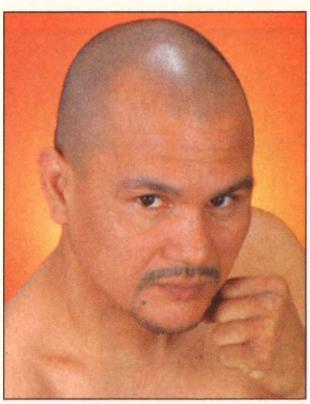
Overrated
Omar Narvarez

Best Fight In 2005
Jorge Arce KO 10 Hussein Hussein



Jorge Arce

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam



Rosendo Alvarez

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT

The 108-pounders are boxing's most ignored weight class. In general, the divisions get more ignored the smaller you go, but at least with the strawweight class they get that tiny bit of extra attention because they own the distinction of being boxing's littlest guys. The junior flys, as the second division up from the bottom, just plain don't matter to most boxing observers.

But while nobody's been paying much attention, it's actually been a busy, sometimes exciting, and all-around

tumultuous year for the 108-pound division. Three of the top six guys in last year's top 10 (**Victor Burgos**, **Pichit Siriwat**, and **Eric Ortiz**) are gone, while two relatively big names have entered the fray. One of those names is **Brian Viloria**, the 2000 U.S. Olympian who had been campaigning as a flyweight but decided to shed four pounds and aim for his first title here, succeeding by spectacularly blasting out Ortiz in one round. The other recognizable name belongs to veteran **Will Grigsby**, who returned almost six years after losing a junior flyweight alphabet title to Ricardo Lopez and won the same title back from Burgos. Grigsby then promptly lost that strap via close decision to **Ulises Solis**, who has in turn positioned himself as one of the more recognizable fighters in the division.

PHOTO BY MARY ROSENGARTEN

Solis (right) edges Grigsby in a blood-soaked thriller

But at the very top are two lesser-known but interesting fighters with a lot of upside. **Hugo Cazares** is rated second by THE RING, and the Mexican raised some eyebrows with his up-from-the-canvas knockout of **Kaichon Vorapin** that HBO Latino televised as part of their Mexico vs. Thailand card last October. And top-rated **Roberto Vasquez** of Panama started raising eyebrows in April '05 when he knocked out **Beibis Mendoza**, and has continued raising them (though not for American audiences to see) by climbing off the floor to win in each of his first two title defenses.

When compiling "The State Of The Game," you don't have the option of ignoring any weight classes. And when forced to take a close look at this one, we realized there's actually a fair amount going on worth paying attention to.

Think About It: Prior to 2006, there wasn't a single junior flyweight titleholder in the International Boxing Hall of Fame. After this June, there will be two, as famous rivals Michael Carbajal and Chiquita Gonzalez are the itty-bitty headliners of this year's induction class. Now the only division left that isn't represented by a single titleholder is the strawweights—and that'll almost certainly change next year when "Finito" Lopez goes in and becomes the first 105-pound beltholder, as well as the third 108-pound titlist, to enter Canastota.

Brian Viloria

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Hugo Cazares

Best Boxer
Nobuaki Masuda

Most Protected
Vicky Tahumil

Is He Still Around?
Chana Porpaoin

Matchmaker's Dream
Roberto Vasquez-Brian Viloria

Deserves A Title Shot
Nelson Dieppa

Most Fun To Watch
Hugo Cazares

On The Way Down
Noel Arambulet

Underrated
Edgar Sosa

Overrated
Munetsugu Kayo

Best Fight In 2005
Roberto Vasquez KO 10 Beibis Mendoza

PHOTO BY TERESITA CHAVARRIA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Vasquez fires a right at Mendoza en route to 10th-round kayo

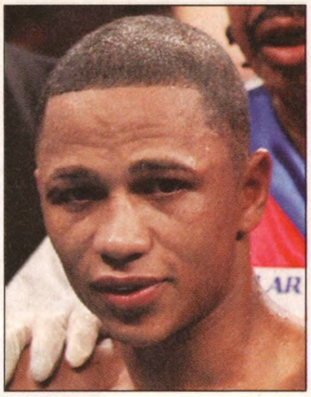
STRAWWEIGHT

Stability. Predictability. Reliability. We all need it in our lives. We like excitement, but we also need a certain sameness to make us feel comfortable. We need routine. And no fighter screams "routine" quite like **Ivan Calderon**.

You don't need to wait until the end of a Calderon fight to know the result. As soon as the opening bell rings, the outcome is already determined: Calderon by near-shutout decision. It's always the same. He's too slick, too quick, he never really hurts his opponent, but he always wins. He's 25-0, with just five knockouts—and those knockouts are never really *knockouts*, they're always stoppages. Calderon hasn't yet faced a prime, top-five-rated straw-

WHAT'S IN, WHAT'S OUT

IN	OUT
"Hitman" Hatton	"Hit Man" Hearns
HBO's crush on Jermain Taylor	HBO's crush on Roy Jones
The Latin Snake	The Black Rhino
Russell Crowe	Dale Crowe
Freddie Roach	Murad Muhammad
Offspring boxing	Fathers coaching
Jhonny Gonzalez	Johnny Tapia
Max on HBO	Jay at Showtime
Frank Warren's guidance	Nacho Beristain's guidance
Steve Wynn	Donald Trump



Ivan Calderon

Yutaka Niida

STRAWWEIGHT

Best Puncher
Rodel Mayol

Best Boxer
Ivan Calderon

Most Protected
Pornsawan Kratingdaenggym

Is He Still Around?
Fahlan Sakkreerin

Matchmaker's Dream
Ivan Calderon-Yutaka Niida

Deserves A Title Shot
Rodel Mayol

Most Fun To Watch
Rodel Mayol

On The Way Down
Isaac Bustos

Underrated
Juan Landaeta

Overrated
Muhammad Rachman

Best Fight In 2005
Yutaka Niida Tech. Win 10 Eriberto Gejon

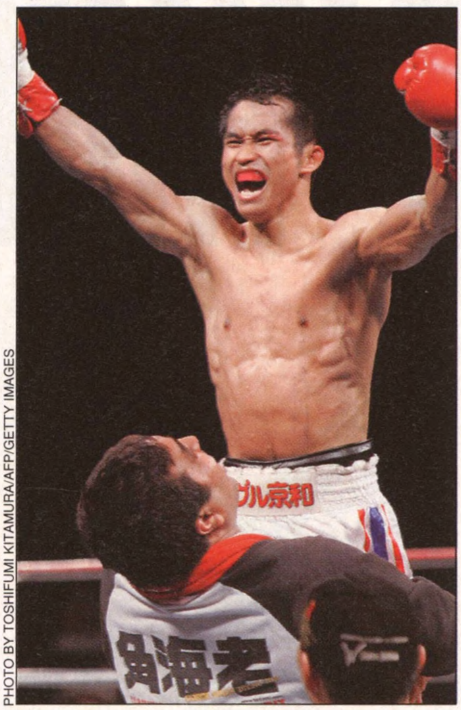


PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kyowa celebrates his victory over Ken Nakajima in Yokohama, Japan

weight, but he's faced a ton of slightly-past-their-best former titleholders—five of them, to precise—and he's defeated them all. Consistency is the name of the game with Calderon. He may not excite you. His pillow fights may help your head hit the pillow and your hand hit the lights. But he seems to be the best 105-pounder in the world right now, and the only notable one who plies his trade in America at all.

Until Calderon's busy schedule and consistency finally elevated him to the top of the rankings, the number-one man in the division was **Yutaka Niida** of Japan. Now four defenses into his second title reign, Niida's only loss was a close decision in his first fight back from a two-year retirement. Though it probably couldn't sell 5,000 pay-per-views in America, a match between Niida and Calderon would be very interesting and would determine the clear leader (and RING champion) in the division.

Nearly everybody else rated in the top 10 is either a titleholder or a former titleholder, as this division seems to recycle its ex-beltholders like no other, mostly because there's a dearth of new talent to take their place. You have Indonesia's **Muhammad Rachman**, who currently holds a belt that he won on a controversial decision over still-top-10 **Daniel Reyes**. You have Japan's **Eagle Kyowa**, who recently began his second title reign with a win over **Kastunari Takayama**, who remains rated in the top five following the loss. You have **Isaac Bustos**, an ex-titleholder and a journeyman at the same time, who clings to the number-10 spot despite a whitewash at the hands of Calderon in February.

The only up-and-comer is **Rodel Mayol**, a hard punching but relatively untested Filipino fighter. Mayol is scheduled to challenge Eagle in May. If he wins, how 'bout a classic boxer vs. puncher fight with Calderon? If Mayol is the goods, who knows, it just might make for a Calderon fight that isn't totally predictable.

Think About It: Remember on *Seinfeld* when George Costanza tried to acquire the nickname "T-Bone," but it didn't catch on because, well, George just wasn't the "T-Bone" type? We know it's a trivial matter, but can we all stop calling Calderon "Iron Boy," please? Let's give him the Costanza treatment. The nickname couldn't fit less. "Iron" worked for Mike Tyson. It doesn't work for this featherfisted mite. ■

TAYLOR DOES THE *WRIGHT* THING ...

BUT WILL IT GIVE THE FANS *SOMETHING WORTH WATCHING?*

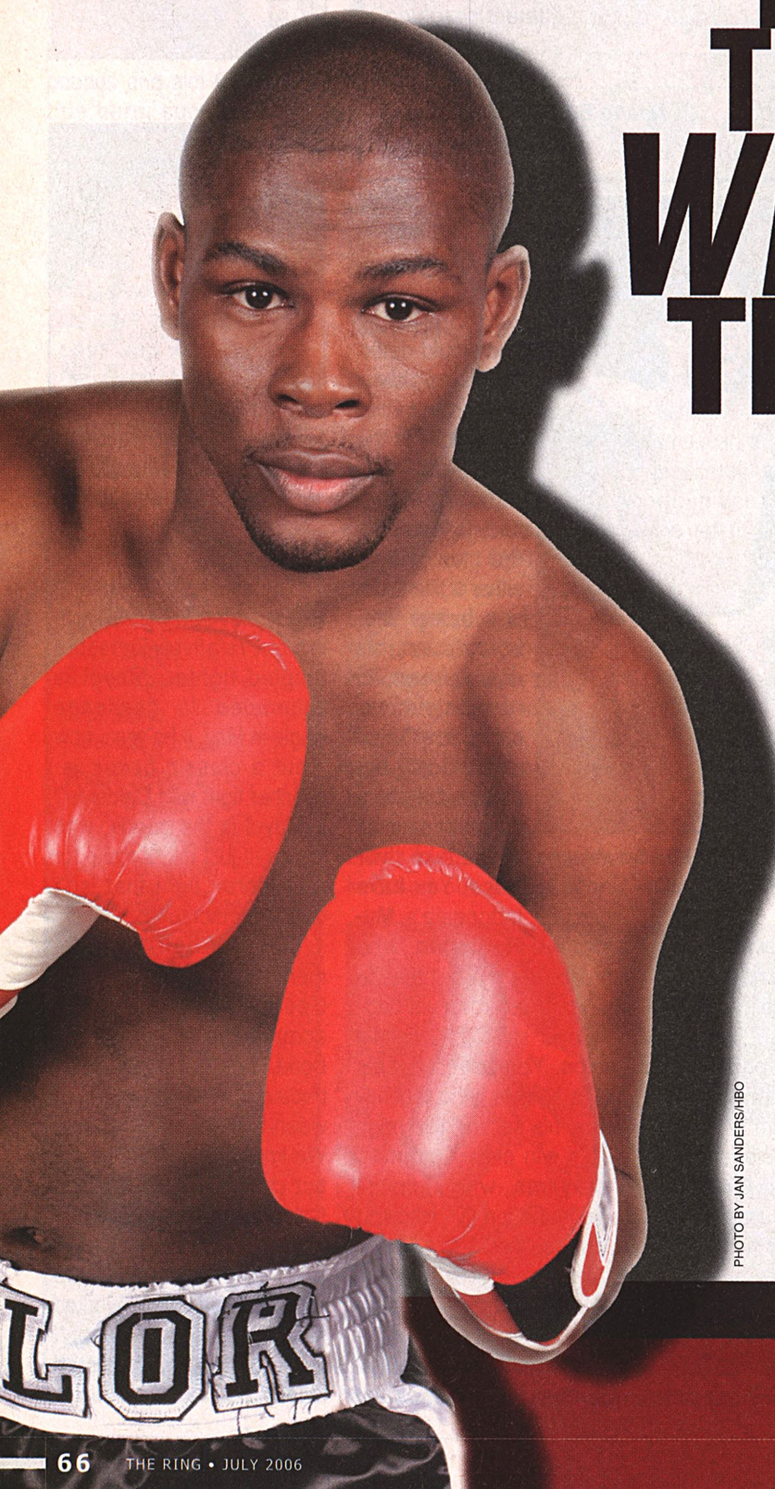


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

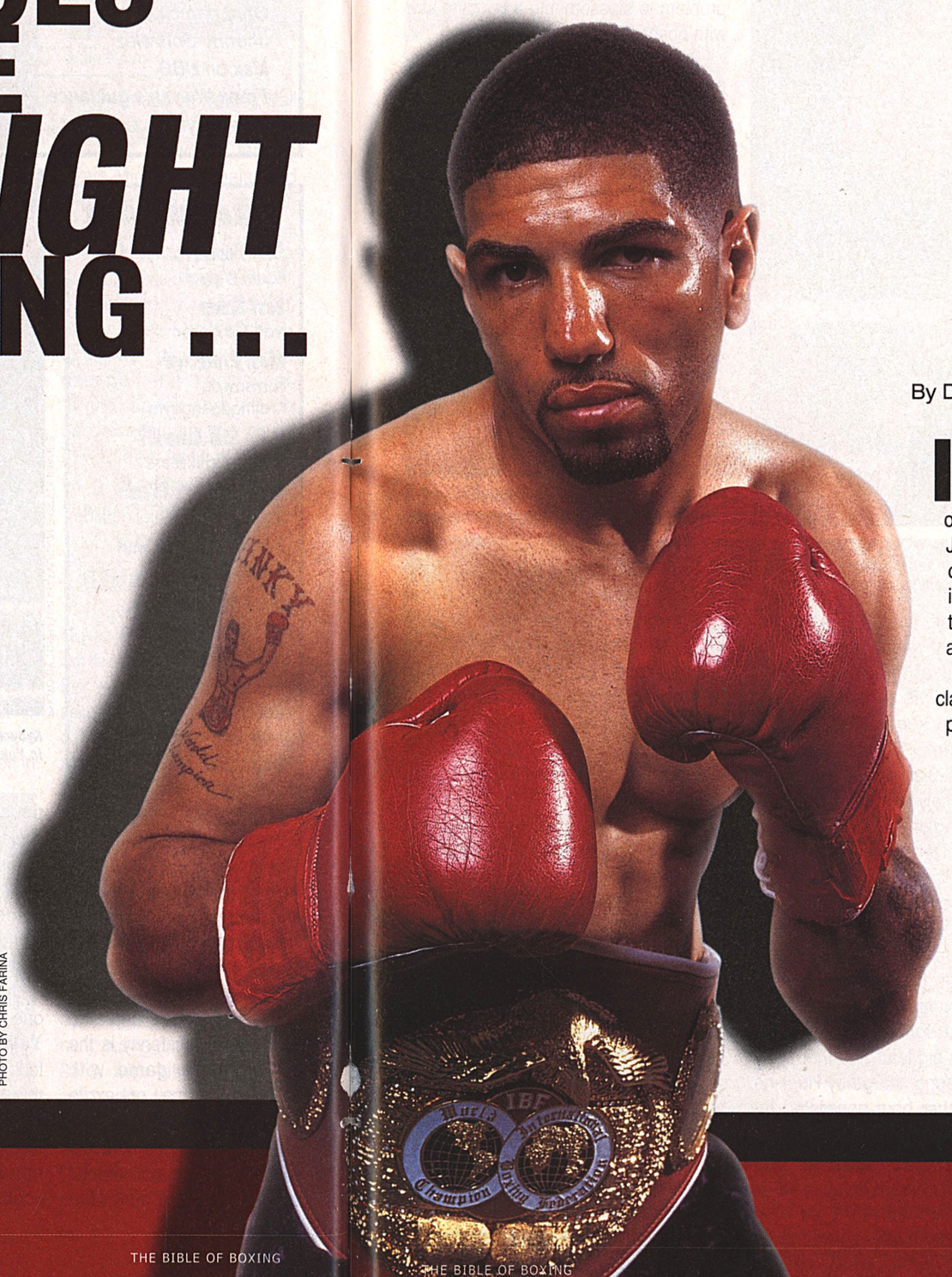


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

By Don Stewart

It's a match pitting the next big thing against the clever iconoclast, a showdown between a genuine world champion and the number-one contender. Even so, the June 17 Jermain Taylor-Winky Wright middleweight championship clash isn't likely to become an instant classic. Maybe we'll be surprised, but this one could end up replacing Lunesta as a doctor-recommended choice for insomnia.

True, Taylor and Wright are both likeable class acts who each possess an abundance of positive fighting skills. Too bad their styles are likely to result in a 12-round chess match few will find entertaining.

Then again, this is boxing, where supposed guarantees are as reliable as FEMA. Maybe we'll tune in to the HBO pay-per-view expecting to sit through an Indy 500, only to be treated to a drag race. Or maybe we should just appreciate that the two best middleweights in the world agreed, after much drama, to meet in a fight they both could have avoided, a fight unlikely to raise either's profile much higher.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The defense against Wright will give Taylor an opportunity to wash away the memory of his two boring fights with Hopkins, bouts that featured as much wrestling and clinching as they did punching. But looking good against Wright has never been easy for anybody.

The hunt for sexy angles will inevitably lead back to what transpired during the negotiation process. That well-publicized series of wacky events could prove to be more exciting than what actually takes place in the ring.

Talks between the two sides dragged on for more than a month. The usual problem, purse splits, was the main sticking point. Taylor threatened to give up the WBC belt and defend against Sam Soliman, who did surprisingly well in an eliminator against Wright back in December 2005. Wright fired promoter Gary Shaw just when a deal appeared imminent, then hired him back just in time to salvage the fight a few hours before the whole thing was to go to purse bids.

"I think it's one of those kinds of fights where you want to see it happen because it matches the top two fighters in the division," ESPN.com boxing writer Dan Rafael said. "But when you think about what might happen in the ring, it's not Hagler-Hearns. That doesn't mean it will be bad. As much as you'd like to see a 35-27 football game, from time to time, you can appreciate a 10-3 game."

Taylor will likely step into the ring as the underdog against the more experienced Wright. Despite squeaking past future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins twice, first to claim and then defend the middleweight crown last year, the 27-year-old still has a lot to prove. Neither of his fights with Hopkins captured the public's imagination. Taylor won both in a somewhat controversial manner, getting off to a big lead and then holding off a late-round charge by Hopkins. Moreover, neither bout generated the sort of exciting exchanges that delight the paying public.

Still, the 2000 Olympic bronze medalist has the potential to be a big draw. He's a quick, athletic pressure fighter with good power, a blue-collar champ who learned the sport in a sweltering Arkansas gym under the guidance of bricklayer Ozell Nelson, who remains in his corner. Taylor is an aw-shucks, humble Razorback who overcame poverty and a stuttering problem to blossom into a budding star with possible crossover appeal.

But, even in victory, it's almost impossible to shine against the clever Hopkins, who survived as a champion into his 40s thanks largely to an awkward style that won rounds by making opponents look terrible. Given the right opponent, maybe a Jeff Lacy or Fernando Vargas, Taylor has both the potential and the style to enthrall.

Unfortunately, Wright isn't that opponent. The 34-year-old southpaw could end up boxing circles around Taylor in much the way he did last May when he humiliated Felix Trinidad. If Taylor, 25-0 (17), gets past the smaller Wright, 50-3 (25), the win looks impressive on his résumé, but his star will not ascend to the next level if it turns out to be his third straight snoozer. Overall, it appears to be high risk, low reward situation for the champion—and perhaps the end of his reign.

"I think it's hard not to lean toward Winky Wright," Rafael said, "because of the experience level and the way he's looked in the previous few years."

It all added up to a tough spot for Taylor and promoter Lou DiBella. Coming off the second Hopkins win, they would have preferred to make a homecoming defense in Little Rock before taking on Wright. But for reasons best known to Taylor and his camp, they caved when the WBC ruled that he had to meet Winky first. Taylor, who, as the legitimate champion, also holds THE RING belt, had already thrown away the worthless IBF trinket to give Hopkins a contractually mandated rematch.

But there's no denying that Taylor should get props for taking on his number-one contender. Otherwise, he'd be listening to criticism for ducking Wright. Basically, it comes down to which is worse: risking a boring fight, win or

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Wright's southpaw jab was in Felix Trinidad's face throughout their May 2005 bout in which Wright scored a virtual shutout and sent "Tito" back into retirement. Many experts believe that the more experienced Wright will outbox Taylor in much the same manner.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Those who think Wright will breeze to an easy victory are probably underestimating Taylor's jab. He didn't get a chance to utilize it as much as he wanted to against the tricky Hopkins, but when it landed, it was effective. It could be key against Wright.

Emile Griffith, who held the very first version of the junior middleweight title, celebrates winning the middleweight championship with a 15-round decision over Dick Tiger in 1966. Not all 154-pound titleholders have been as successful when they moved up.

lose, against one of the best pound-for-pound fighters on the planet or being perceived as yellow?

"I just want all my fans to know that I ain't never ran from nobody," Taylor said. "Everybody acts like I don't want to fight Winky Wright. I want to fight the best that's out there. After Winky, I ain't gonna take a break. I'll fight the next best guy that's out there. If my career's gonna end, I'm gonna end with the best that's out there."

Wright had other options as well, but none of them as lucrative as fighting Taylor. Still, he insists, somewhat disingenuously, that he never campaigned for a shot at Taylor.

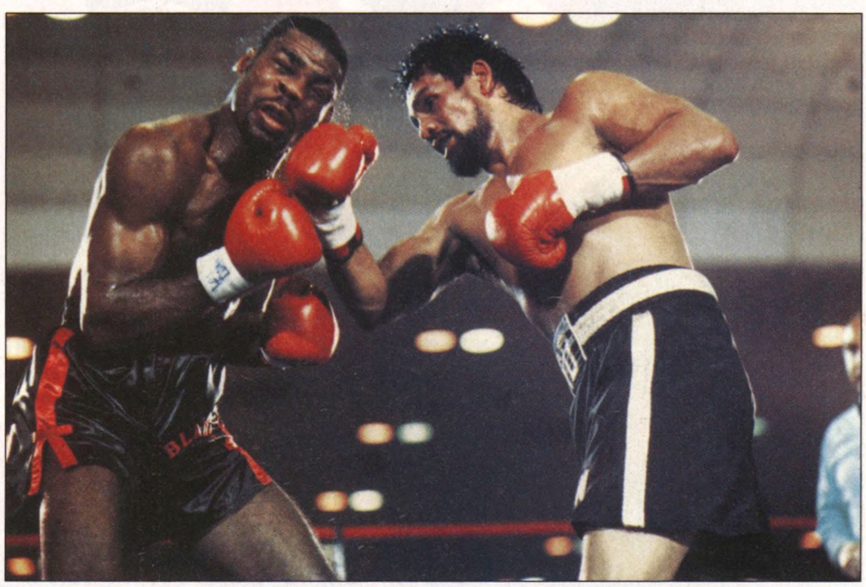
"I didn't ask for this fight," claimed Wright. "It wasn't like I went out looking for Jermain. Look, this is the fight people wanted to see."

Wright, who will fight under the banner of his own company, Winky Wright Promotions after June 17, stands to gain more from this fight than Taylor. Before he finally broke through with his victory over Shane Mosley two years ago, Wright had been forced to perfect his slick style in fights spread across four continents in eight different countries. But a win over Taylor would make him a legit two-division champion and strengthens his position. Wright, 34, would be able to call his own shots as a major player in a boxing establishment that for years seemed to be denying him his due.

"It's big," Wright said. "I think the Trinidad fight was bigger, but it's a big fight. Jermain is a great young fighter. He's proven that he can fight with Bernard Hopkins. The two best middleweights come together."

It's a match pitting Wright's masterful defense and southpaw jab against Taylor's speed and pressure. Taylor's fought southpaws before, but Raul Marquez, Alex Rios, and Keith Sims are nothing like Wright. But who is? Regardless, getting plenty of sparring with conventional southpaws will be essential for Taylor, who must fight at a hard pace for 12 rounds and smother Wright to prevent him from establishing his jab.

For Wright, the key is simple: box, box, and box some more, as he did in shutting out Trinidad last May. Unlike Trinidad, Taylor is likely to have a backup plan in mind if he's dominated early. Wright will have to be ready for that eventuality, though his experience and ring smarts figure to keep him one step ahead in the chess match.



Roberto Duran, who won the WBA junior middleweight belt in 1983, failed in his first attempt to capture the middleweight crown when Marvin Hagler outpointed him later that year. But, in 1989, Duran succeeded in winning the WBC middleweight title by beating Iran Barkley (pictured).

PHOTO BY DOUG BENC/GETTY IMAGES

The most recent junior middleweight titlist to attempt to win the middleweight title was Oscar De La Hoya, who held both the WBA and WBC 154-pound belts at one time. But "The Golden Boy" ended up a knockout loser when he challenged then-middleweight king Bernard Hopkins in 2004 (pictured).

"I fought a lot of right-handed, tall fighters," Wright said. "Jermain doesn't have a style that's different or wildly difficult. He's just a very good fighter. I expect a very technical fight, a very smart fight. I expect an exciting fight. Neither of us wants to lose. We're going to do whatever it takes to win. That will bring the excitement. The stage is set. Now, may the best man win."

Taylor stands 6'1", while Wright is listed at 5'10½". Don't underestimate the size difference. Historically, junior middleweight champs don't have a great track record of moving up and breezing to the middleweight throne. If Wright beats Taylor, he'll be in good company, as only Emile Griffith, Nino Benvenuti, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Julian Jackson have moved up to win a middleweight belt on their first try after holding a title at 154 pounds.

Thomas Hearns, of course, was stopped by Hagler on his first attempt, but beat Juan Roldan two years later for a vacant strap. Roberto Duran, who also lost to Hagler in his first go at the middleweight crown, beat Iran Barkley five years later for a belt at 160. Sumbu Kalambay thwarted Mike McCallum's first attempt, but "The Body Snatcher" picked up a vacant middleweight title a year later.

The list of junior middleweight champs who failed to win titles at 160 includes Denny Moyer, Paul Vaden, Simon Brown, Donald Curry, Trinidad, and De La Hoya.

Because he believes Wright can't knock him out, Taylor isn't concerned that his second defense will be his last.

"First of all, he's a great fighter with a great defense," Taylor said. "But I think I'm a bigger fighter, a stronger fighter. I don't think I'll have any problem with him. He has good defense, but other than that, I don't think he's a problem at all."

While many disagree with that assessment and see Wright winning easily, this one is likely to end in a tight decision mirroring Taylor-Hopkins. The X-factor is Taylor's jab, which has been a vastly underrated weapon, probably because we didn't see a lot of it against Hopkins.

"I do think it'll be a closer fight than people expect," Rafael said. "People look at it and say, 'Winky is a much better boxer; he'll win the fight.' But the battle of jabs is going to be important. I think we'll see a lot of heads rocking back in this fight. Not that they'll be in a war, but we should see a lot of solid shots connecting."

Thankfully, HBO has decided that the event would not be on pay-per view. "If it turns out to be terrible," noted Rafael, "at least no one can complain about wasting $50." ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

TAYLOR VS. WRIGHT

What The Experts Say

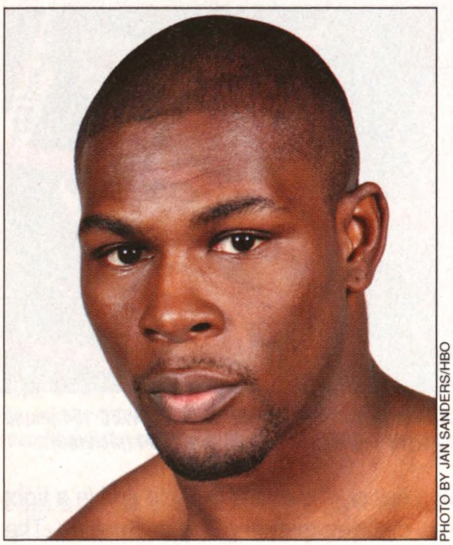


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

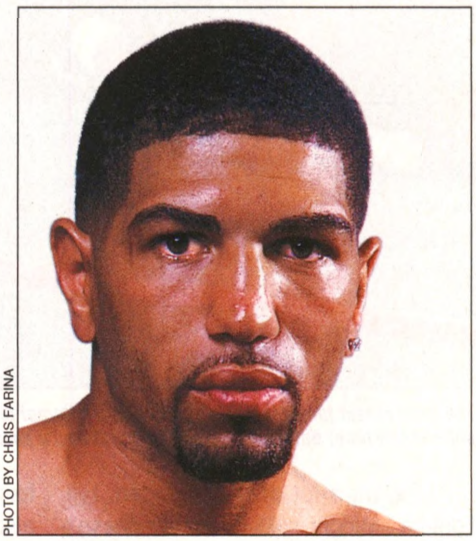


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

STEVE KIM (*Maxboxing.com senior writer*): "I like Winky Wright. He's more technically sound. He's a more seasoned fighter and I just get the sense he's more fundamentally grounded."

STEVE FARHOOD (*Showtime's* ***ShoBox*** *analyst*): "I think that Jermain is a superior talent and a wonderful kid who has clear star potential, but given what happened in the two Hopkins fights, he desperately needs to look good and exciting and Winky Wright isn't the right guy for that. I'll watch the fight, but is the timing perfect? No. This is an example of the public making a fight and public demand overwhelming commonsense. It's a critical fight for both guys. Jermain needs to erase some of the doubts created in the two Hopkins fights and Winky needs to continue to try to establish himself as a star. It's up to Jermain to turn this into an exciting fight. I think it will be a very competitive fight and I pick Taylor on points in a minor upset."

KASSIM OUMA (*junior middleweight contender*): "Winky will win. Jermain is a hot fighter, but I like Winky. I base that on Winky being in the game for so long. His experience will win out."

ROB MURRAY (*radio host for Philadelphia's* ***This Week In Sports****, WURD 900 AM*): "Jermain beats Winky and beats Winky bad. Jermain Taylor is a flat-out very strong middleweight, which is something Bernard Hopkins found out. Wright is a very good junior middleweight, but Taylor is too big and powerful for Wright and will win a decision."

EMANUEL STEWARD (*Hall of Fame trainer*): "I'll put it this way: Jermain did not look good his last fights. I don't know whether or not it had to do with styles. Jermain and Hopkins are two cautious, technical fighters. With Winky Wright, Jermain is going to have to press more. It will be a physical fight. Jermain better in be in good position to counterpunch because you throw something at Winky, he comes right back at you. Taylor is going to come out with a lot to prove. I could easily see this as a draw."

DON ELBAUM (*promoter/matchmaker*): "I love the fight. Boxing is starting to rise because they're putting so many great fights together like this. I look at the fight differently than a lot of other people do. On paper, you have two top-notch guys. It's a close betting fight that could go either way, but there's no way it's going to be a knockout. Taylor will be busier and that will allow him to retain the title by decision."

LEM SATTERFIELD (***Baltimore Sun*** *boxing writer*): "I'm going to go with Taylor. Patience has to be a premium for Taylor and he cannot have the defensive lapses as he did against Hopkins. Wright took a lot more punches in the second Shane Mosley fight than people realize. Taylor is a younger fighter, and in the end, I see Jermain keeping his distance and outboxing Winky behind his jab."

TONY PAIGE (*radio host for New York's WFAN 660 AM*): "It's such a tough call. Jermain will have to keep to a game plan and outwork Winky, which makes it a tough call. I'm leaning toward Wright because he's faced so many different styles and so many different types of opponents. For Jermain to win, he's going to have to set a fast pace and keep it."

TIM GRAHAM (***Buffalo News*** *boxing writer and president of the Boxing Writers Association of America*): "I think Winky Wright is the most complete boxer in the game today. As good as Jermain is, I think Winky would have handled Bernard Hopkins a little easier than Jermain did. Winky doesn't have the most complete arsenal, but when it comes to pure boxing, he's difficult to match up against. I say Wright by decision."

AL BERNSTEIN (***Showtime Championship Boxing*** *analyst*): "It's a real, real interesting contest. I'm not sure it will be a barnburner or terribly exciting, but it's one the most interesting fights of the last decade. Winky Wright is almost perfect, but there is a way to beat him. You have to stay outside, stay tall, keep a distance, and stay far away from Winky's jab. If Taylor does that, and he's capable, it's a very tough fight for Wright. I have to say I like Taylor by decision. He has the right style. This is stylistic problem for Winky."

KEITH IDEC (***Herald News Of New Jersey*** *boxing writer*): "I like Winky by decision. Winky fights up or down to the talent level of his opponent. Unfortunately for Jermain Taylor, there's no way Wright will underestimate the man who beat the man." ■

STAFF PICKS

Nigel Collins: **Taylor W 12**
"I think a lot of folks have been misled by Wright's wins over Trinidad and Mosley. Taylor is much bigger than Mosley and nowhere near as one-dimensional as Trinidad. Look for a boring, tactical bout in which Taylor's youth, strength, and underrated skills carry him to narrow decision victory."

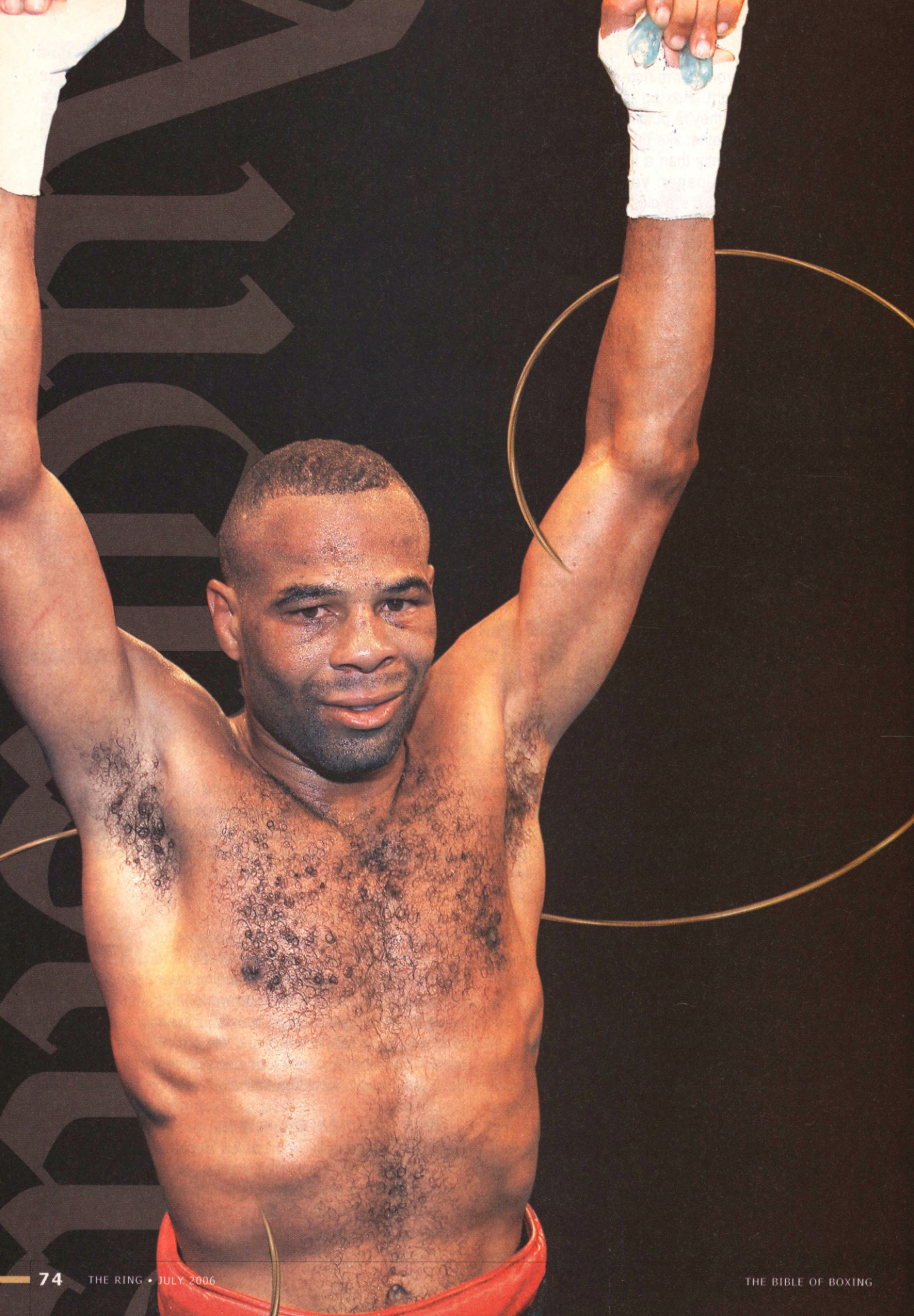
Joe Santoliquito: **Taylor W 12**
"Taylor has to be sky-high going into this after beating Hopkins twice. But I find it surprising that Jermain still feels that he has something to prove. I think he will this time."

Eric Raskin: **Wright W 12**
After seeing Joe Calzaghe-Jeff Lacy, in which the smarter veteran southpaw took the athletic but relatively inexperienced young Olympian to school, how can you not pick Wright? Sure, the styles are different, but the result should be the same: The smarter, slicker fighter dominates. Wright will have the energy to fight hard for all 12 rounds, and if Bernard Hopkins could still do the same, we wouldn't even be talking about this fight."

William Dettloff: **Wright W 12**
"Taylor's jab will give Winky some problems, but not enough to get him the win. Wright is too sharp and too sound, and he'll win a close but deserved decision."

Jeff Ryan: **Wright W 12**
"Taylor's choice of such a tough opponent for his second defense is both admirable and foolish. If he had such difficulty landing clean punches on Hopkins, how in the world is he going to hit Wright enough to win? Expect Wright to duck, slip, counter, and win a comfortable, albeit dull, unanimous decision that devalues Taylor's stock dramatically."

Ivan Goldman: **Wright W 12**
"Jermain never really figured out Hopkins, and he had 24 rounds to do it. I rather doubt he can solve Winky's particularly imposing southpaw riddle inside of 12, even if Winky is slipping a little."



Hail Augustus!

Boxing's Journeyman King

By Bill Dettloff
PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

You get the sense it would be easier for everyone involved if Emanuel Augustus couldn't fight as well as he does. If he couldn't, we wouldn't know him much outside his name appearing like ellipses on so many records, and we wouldn't care much about him. If we thought of him at all, it would be the way we do about the dozens or maybe hundreds of other guys out there whose only purpose inside the ring is to bulk up the records of guys who *can* fight. That's their job. We see the name and forget it just as quickly. You can't care about everybody.

Come to think of it, it probably would be easier for Augustus too if he weren't quite as good as he is in the ring. There would be no expectations, none of the maddening chase that tortures and wears down anyone who is engaged or otherwise struggling toward something. If he couldn't fight, he could surrender to mediocrity, accept it like so many of us do.

Augustus got off to a slow start against Jaime Rangel, trying to adjust to Rangel's southpaw stance (above). But the junior welterweight started finding a pace in the fifth round, using right leads and uppercuts (below).

Submitting has its down side of course, like anything else, especially for prizefighters, who, let's face it, don't usually have a lot of career options outside the gym. But at least he could relax a little. Kick back. Party without the nagging worry of the drug test that will come with the next fight. Because who cares if a guy who isn't expected to win anyway comes up dirty? What difference would it make?

Augustus' great curse, and ours too it turns out, is that he *can* fight. Not so well or successfully that he is or likely ever will be a world champion, or even so well that he is likely to crack the top 12 of the junior welterweight division. But well enough so that we want to watch him. Well enough so that he'll always win more than he loses. Well enough to bump off the occasional undefeated prospect. And well enough to keep him in the business and keep us caring about him.

Evidence of this curse was apparent during Augustus' 10th-round knockout of the not nearly as bedeviled Jaime Rangel on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* in Connecticut in February. After a somewhat languid start that seemed caused in some degree by Rangel's southpaw stance and quick overhand lefts, Augustus, 32-25-6 (17), found his rhythm in the fifth round. After that, he sliced Rangel up with piercing right-

Augustus' proclivity for give-and-take fights, like his brawl against Rangel, makes him a fight fan favorite. Now, with promoter Lou DiBella representing him, Augustus fought with more urgency against Rangel than he had in the past.

hand leads and uppercuts and gradually took over entirely on the way to flooring Rangel twice, prompting referee Dick Flaherty to stop it at 2:27 of the 10th. It was, given his history, a somewhat more urgent performance than what we've come to expect.

"The situation is what it is," Augustus told THE RING. "I played around in boxing long enough and now I have a reason to buckle down and do better. I got a promoter to fight for now. Now it's the way it's supposed to be. Before, it didn't matter whether I won or lost. Now it does."

Augustus is referring to Lou DiBella, who promotes him now and has won the fighter's confidence. "Lou DiBella works for the benefit of the fighters," Augustus said. "I'm not saying anything bad about promoters I've had in the past, but this is the way it's supposed to be now. It's how it was always supposed to be."

Augustus' up-and-down ring exploits are by now well known to the fight community and not altogether uncommon. About every generation has a fighter or two like Augustus: talented journeymen who came from nothing and had no direction or good management early on and got into a hole record-wise from the start. They take fights on short notice because they need the money and there's no one around to tell them not to, and they take fights in other guys' hometowns for the same reasons. They can fight all right, but it takes more than that, a lot more, to win the boxing lottery, and by the time guys like Augustus realize it, it's too late.

Augustus has lost four-straight fights on two separate occasions and during one particularly bad stretch dropped five of six. He then went 9-0-1 in his next 10. He's lost to Jesus Chavez and Ivan Robinson, Pete Taliaferro and Diosbelys Hurtado. Leonard Dorin ran roughshod over him and so did Antonio Diaz. Omar Weis outpointed him and so did Olympians Kelson Pinto and David Diaz. He's lost decisions in Puerto Rico, Denmark, Germany, and Nashville, but you'd have to be naive, at the least, to think all those defeats were legitimate in the sense that the right guy got his hand raised at the end.

Ironically, Augustus benefited when he was clearly robbed in a July 2004 decision loss to Courtney Burton, which happened to be televised on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. He became immediately sympathetic, and the media and fan uproar, guided in the main by broadcasters Teddy Atlas and Joe Tessitore, led to judging and scoring changes in Michigan. But the loss remains on Augustus' ledger, as all of them will.

Augustus can only take so many victories over mid-range opponents like Rangel. At 31, his body clock is ticking. Landing punches such as this left hook will certainly help. "I've got to make it in boxing before my time is up," he said.

always argue that a fight was taken away by the judges, but if you knock them out, they can't take it from you."

Still, the bitterness over those losses, legitimate or not, informs his recent dedication. "When I first started, it was all about having fun in the ring. I used to make up punches based on video games. I had a style I called 'Crazy Legs' that I tried out in the gym and then in a couple fights. But I never took it too seriously. I never really said, 'I want to be a champion,' but I do now. I really do. And I can't be pushed out of boxing. I won't be. I feel like there are people who want to push me out of boxing. The fighters can't beat me so they get the referees and judges to do it for them."

Augustus' stubbornness can be traced to a past that is clearly the kind that breeds toughness. For reasons he is either unsure of or loath to detail, his parents relinquished custody of him to the state when he was around two years old. He grew up "in the system" and spent his childhood and adolescence largely at The Harmony Center, a group home in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. One of the administrators there also ran The Sports Academy, a recreational facility at which Augustus was introduced to formal boxing, though he'd studied the rudiments informally many times over. "I fought all the time and the majority of the guys I fought were bigger than me," he recalled.

Augustus left the system at 17 years old and did two short stints in the Baton Rouge City Jail for charges relating to resisting arrest, battery of a police officer, and the like. But even by then he'd already realized he had to do something with his life.

"I knew that I wasn't really good at anything I could make money at and I'd always have low-rate jobs," he recalled. "I knew I wasn't good at school and wasn't going back. So you do what you're good at. It's a cliche but it's true. I knew I was good at boxing so I decided I would do that." He went to the 16th Street BREC Gym in Baton Rouge and with the help of good people things started to come together, just a little.

"A great guy named Frank James got me a job, a place to live, I got my GED, and a woman named Alberta

Officially, they're losses and when we're all dust, they'll still be losses, so you can argue all you want. Augustus accepts the business structure of the sport as it relates to his record and refuses to rationalize them away.

"The fighter's still got to win the fight," he said. "No one's at fault but me. I can

Williams, who had a daughter and three sons, took me in and made me part of her family," Augustus said. "I don't know where I'd be now if it weren't for her and other people in my life who helped me when I needed it." With that stability, he committed himself to the game and after about 25 amateur fights turned pro.

Augustus remains philosophical about his parents. "For the most part I'm just glad I got a chance to know my mother and father. Whatever it is, it is. I'm grown now, so I don't hold grudges. My state of mind is I'd rather have than not have; a lot of people don't know their mothers or fathers. So I'm lucky. Once I got out of the group home I had a lot more contact with my brother. He comes to my fights and cheers me on."

For all the losses, there has been much to cheer. Augustus gave Floyd Mayweather his toughest fight up to that point when they met in October 2000. He was a big underdog when he trounced the heavily hyped and very talented Alex Trujillo in April '04. Same thing when he stepped in on two days notice and stopped Carlos Vilches in July '02. His war with Micky Ward in July '01 was the springboard to Ward's fights with Arturo Gatti and was THE RING's Fight of the Year. Ward could be seen at ringside screaming instructions to Augustus during the Rangel fight.

"We threw something like 2,000 punches that night," Ward said recently of his battle with Augustus. "He's as crafty as they come. He knows the ring real well. When he's on he can give anyone at 140 pounds a hard time. He's a real throwback fighter. He's a lot like Freddie Pendelton. He had all those losses on his record early in his career, but when he started doing things right, living right, he was unbeatable. I can't say enough about him."

The truth is Augustus may have another loss on his record by the time you read this (he was scheduled to face Antonio Mora as we went to press and wants to keep a busy schedule). And not all of his defeats have been the result of shabby treatment. Until recently at least, he's fought just hard enough in many cases to keep from losing, but a fighter is rarely the best judge of how things are going score-wise. His style, as much as anything else, may be contributing to those close decision losses.

"There's some inconsistency in the ring as far as offense goes," offered Atlas. "He's a talented kid, he knows how to fight and he's got a fighter's mentality. But he's not consistent. In spots he'll be very productive. Then you won't see anything for a while. He goes defensive and doesn't do anything. When he takes time off like that, he gives you opportunities to steal moments and to steal rounds and fights. His spottiness allows a fight to be close, allows judges to give it to the other guy."

Atlas relates most things in human performance to self-discipline and Augustus' lapses are fair game. "He's had a couple of drug tests come back

Augustus fought in spurts against Rangel. If he ever plans on getting a title shot, Augustus could be more disciplined in and out of the ring, according ESPN2 **Friday Night Fights** *color analyst Teddy Atlas. "He's a talented kid, he knows how to fight ... But he's not consistent."*

Augustus knows that the best way to prevent decisions going against him is to score knockout, which is exactly what he did in the Rangel fight.

bad. I don't hold it against him, it's out there, it's a fact," said Atlas. "I like him a lot, but I think that speaks to a certain lack of discipline in certain areas. And if you show a lack of discipline outside the ring, you're going to show it inside the ring too. It works that way in any profession. Show me a trial lawyer who's undisciplined and inconsistent outside the courtroom and I'll show you one who's the same way inside the courtroom. It's the same way in boxing, the same way in everything."

Augustus acknowledges he's made mistakes along those lines. After the Rangel fight, he told boxing writer Robert Mladinich, "People act like I'm supposed to be a role model, but nobody's ever given me anything. I don't understand where I'm at, so how do I act? I know I'm not supposed to smoke weed, but I have no sponsors, no one investing money in me. Still, I promise that I won't make that mistake again."

Mistakes haven't hurt his standing with ESPN2, which has televised several of his fights with more planned. "I'm sure we'll have him back on our air soon because we like him," said Atlas. "He makes good fights and is entertaining. The fans like him too. There's a certain comfort level they have knowing that they're going to see a good fight when he's on. Also, he's a high enough caliber talent that he can be in there with almost anybody and be in the fight."

Augustus never shies away from a big fight and knows that, at 31, he won't be around forever. At this point he's got to make every fight count. "My chances [for a big fight] are very high," he said. "I just got to keep doing what the hell I'm doing and not get caught. As soon as I get knocked out or cut, it's over. I know that. I have too many losses. I can't waste any more. I've got to make it in boxing before my time is up.

"My record will always haunt me, but I don't want it all to be for nothing. I'm the living image of what it means to get knocked down and get back up. When it's over, it's over, but until then I have to do it right. I have to win these fights."

It's hard not to hope he does just that. ■

THE RING BOXING ALMANAC

Limited quantities of the *Ring Boxing Almanacs* are still available. Send a check or money order for $7 each (postage included) to: London Publishing Co., P.O. Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034.

Please check issue(s) desired; I have enclosed $7 each as payment in full:

- ☐ 1997 Ring Boxing Almanac
- ☐ 2001 Ring Boxing Almanac
- ☐ 2002 Ring Boxing Almanac
- ☐ 2003 Ring Boxing Almanac
- ☐ 2004 Ring Boxing Almanac

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ APT. _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

In all countries outside the U.S., please add $3 for every issue to be sent airmail or $1.50 for every issue to be sent surface mail. International money orders in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

6550/03-04

MOVING?

Kindly give us 8 weeks advance notice

Are you moving? If so, please give us 8 weeks advance notice so we can continue to service your subscription promptly. Check the magazine(s) below to which you subscribe:

- ☐ KO PRESENTS BOXING 2006
- ☐ WORLD BOXING
- ☐ THE RING

NAME _____

OLD ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ **ZIP** _____

NEW ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ **ZIP** _____

EFFECTIVE DATE _____

CLIP THIS FORM AND SEND TO:

LONDON PUBLISHING CO.
P.O. BOX 2085,
MARION, OH 43306-8185

5757/09-01/4c

International Boxing Hall of Fame

Limited Autograph Souvenirs

Boxing Greats Helping Support the Museum

The Showplace of Boxing — Boxing Hall of Fame — Canastota, NY

Certificate of Authenticity accompanies each item

EVERLAST SPEED BAG

$195

Autographed by 23 "Greats"

Arguello ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Carbajal ★ Chacon ★ Chuvalo ★ Corrales ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ LaMotta ★ Lopez ★ McGuigan ★ Minter ★ Mosley ★ Norris ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Pryor ★ Spinks ★ Starling ★ Stracey ★ Torres ★ Ward ★

GIANT GOLD GLOVE

$225

Autographed by 23 "Greats"

Arguello ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Carbajal ★ Chacon ★ Chuvalo ★ Corrales ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ LaMotta ★ Lopez ★ McGuigan ★ Minter ★ Mosley ★ Norris ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Pryor ★ Spinks ★ Starling ★ Stracey ★ Torres ★ Ward ★

MIDDLEWEIGHT GLOVE

6 Middleweight autographs on Everlast glove

★ Marvelous Marvin Hagler
★ Carmen Basilio
★ Emile Griffith
★ Jake LaMotta
★ Alan Minter
★ Nino Benvenuti

$125

★ Limited Quantity ★

ARGUELLO & PRYOR

Both champions on Everlast glove
OR
Both champions of Everlast trunks

ARGUELLO

$105

PRYOR

★ Limited Quantity ★

AUTOGRAPH GLOVES

$85

(single autograph on Everlast glove)

★ Earnie Shavers
★ Carmen Basilio
★ Leon Spinks
★ Michael Spinks
★ Aaron Pryor
★ Christy Martin
★ Ken Norton
★ Virgil Hill
★ Kid Gavilan
★ Ken Buchanan
★ Azumah Nelson
★ Buddy McGirt
★ Michael Carbajal
★ Barry McGuigan
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Carlos Palomino
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Dwight Qawi
★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee
★ Angel Manfredy
★ Terry Norris
★ Livingstone Bramble
★ Ricardo "Finito" Lopez
★ James "Buster" Douglas
★ Danny "Little Red" Lopez

CARBAJAL

WARD

MORRISON

NELSON

COMBINATION GLOVE

(two autographs on Everlast glove)

$105

★ Nelson - Fenech
★ Basilio - Fullmer
★ Arguello - Pryor
★ Benvenuti - Griffith
★ Leon & Cory Spinks

TODAY'S STARS

(single autograph on Everlast glove)

$85

★ Acelino "Popo" Freitas
★ Johnny Tapia
★ Arturo "Thunder" Gatti
★ Antonio "Magic Man" Tarver
★ Diego "Chico" Corrales
★ "Sugar" Shane Mosley
★ James "Lights Out" Toney

CHAMPIONSHIP GLOVE

All 22 autographs on Everlast glove

$195

Arguello ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Carbajal ★ Chacon ★ Chuvalo ★ Corrales ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ Lopez ★ McGuigan ★ Minter ★ Mosley ★ Norris ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Pryor ★ Spinks ★ Starling ★ Stracey ★ Torres ★ Ward ★

EVERLAST CORNER POST

$275

Autographed by 23 greats:

Arguello ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Carbajal ★ Chacon ★ Chuvalo ★ Corrales ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ LaMotta ★ Lopez ★ McGuigan ★ Minter ★ Mosley ★ Norris ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Pryor ★ Spinks ★ Starling ★ Stracey ★ Torres ★ Ward ★

BOXING ROBE

23 autographs on Everlast robe

$275

Arguello ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Carbajal ★ Chacon ★ Chuvalo ★ Corrales ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ LaMotta ★ Lopez ★ McGuigan ★ Minter ★ Mosley ★ Norris ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Pryor ★ Spinks ★ Starling ★ Stracey ★ Torres Ward

HEAVYWEIGHT GLOVE

5 Heavyweight autographs on Everlast glove

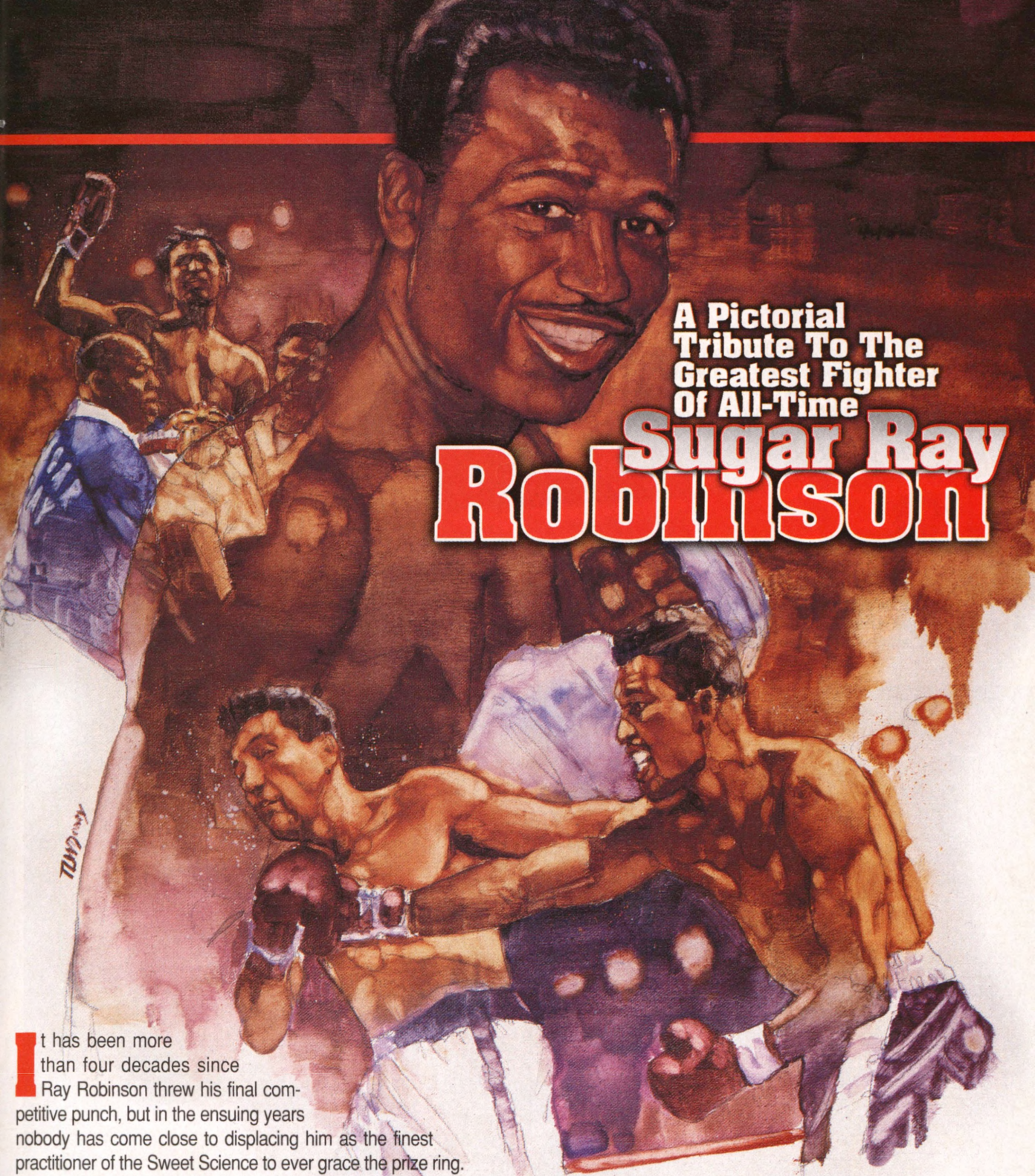
★ Ken Norton
★ Leon Spinks
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ George Chuvalo
★ Earnie Shavers

$125

Phone Orders: (315) 697-7095
Fax (315) 697-5356

Make checks payable to:
BOXING HALL OF FAME
1 Hall of Fame Drive
Canastota, NY 13032

Please add 8% Sales Tax
and $8.00 per item for shipping in U.S.
Call for International shipping rates



A Pictorial Tribute To The Greatest Fighter Of All-Time

Sugar Ray Robinson

It has been more than four decades since Ray Robinson threw his final competitive punch, but in the ensuing years nobody has come close to displacing him as the finest practitioner of the Sweet Science to ever grace the prize ring.

Robinson turned pro in 1940, and by the time he hung up his gloves for good in 1965, he'd had 202 professional fights and compiled an overall record of 175-19-6 (109) with 1 no-contest and 1 no-decision. Thirteen of his losses came in the final five years of his career.

Robinson held both the welterweight and middleweight championships (five times) and was selected as THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 1942 and '51. Nine of the men he beat are enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame along with Robinson. But statistics alone fail to convey the original Sugar Ray's true greatness; we'll leave that to a wordsmith who was just as exceptional at his craft as Robinson was at his:

"Robinson was beautiful at what he did," wrote legendary *Los Angeles Times* columnist Jim Murray. "He brought grace, rhythm, style, even science to a cruel craft. If Nureyev were a fighter, he would do it Ray's way."

If he had lived, Ray Robinson would have turned 85 on May 3, 2006—one day after this issue hits the newsstands. The following pictorial tribute is both a reminder of his greatness and a celebration of his unique place in boxing history.

1

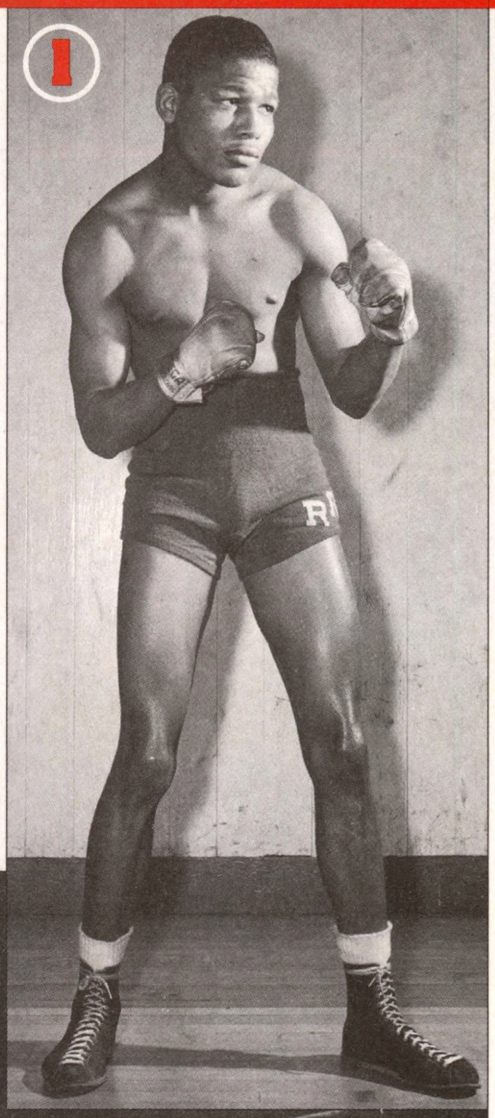
A Magnificent Specimen:
This is how Robinson looked in mid-1940s, when many historians believe he was at his fighting best, a virtually unbeatable boxer-puncher who combined blazing speed, peerless technique, and a paralyzing punch.

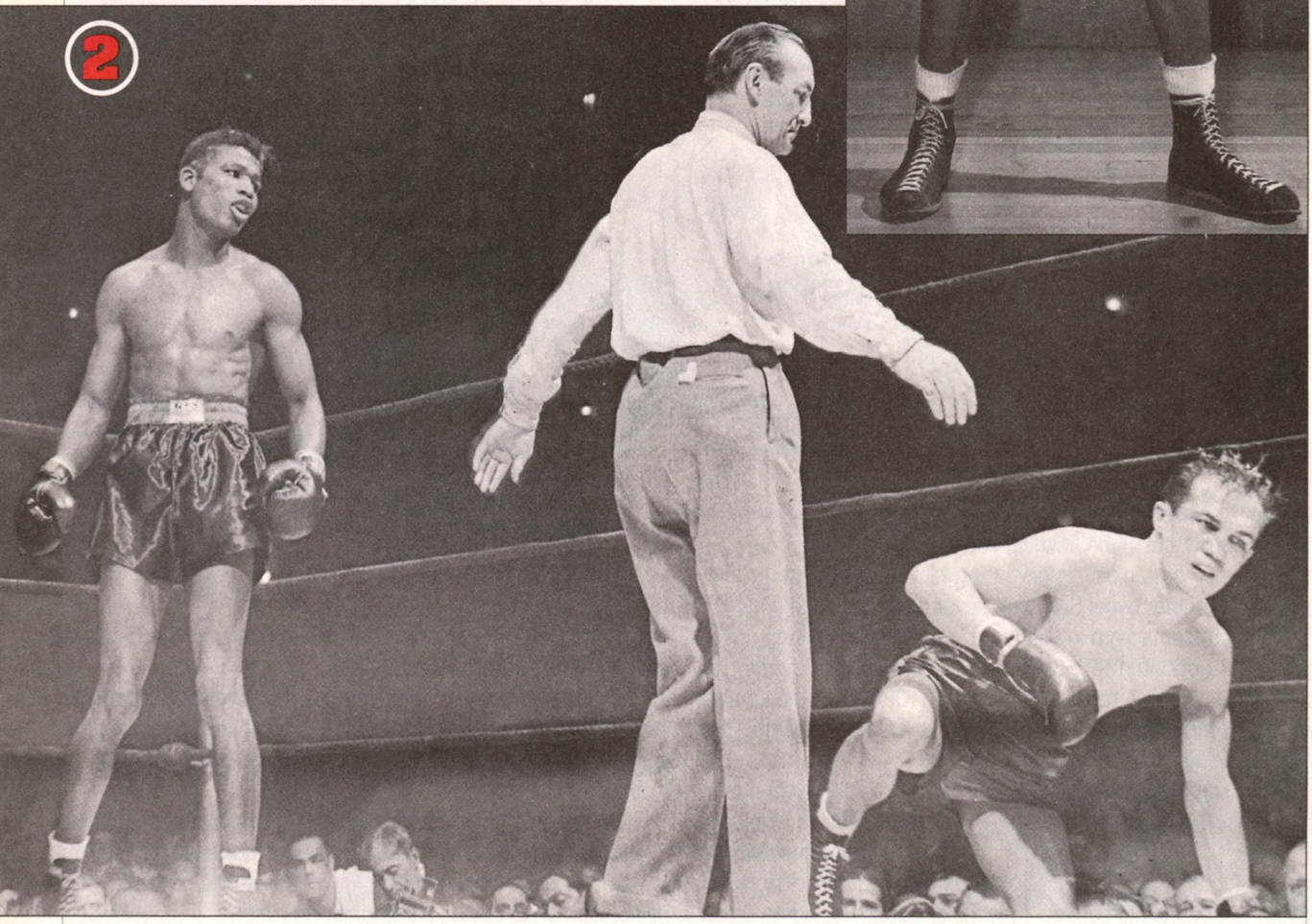
2

Zivic Zapped:
Fritzie Zivic had just lost the welterweight championship the first time he faced Robinson, in October 1941, and still had enough left to last the distance. But when they fought again in January '42, Sugar Ray stopped the veteran campaigner in the 10th round. It turned out to be quite a year for Robinson, who went on to win 12 more bouts before the year was over.

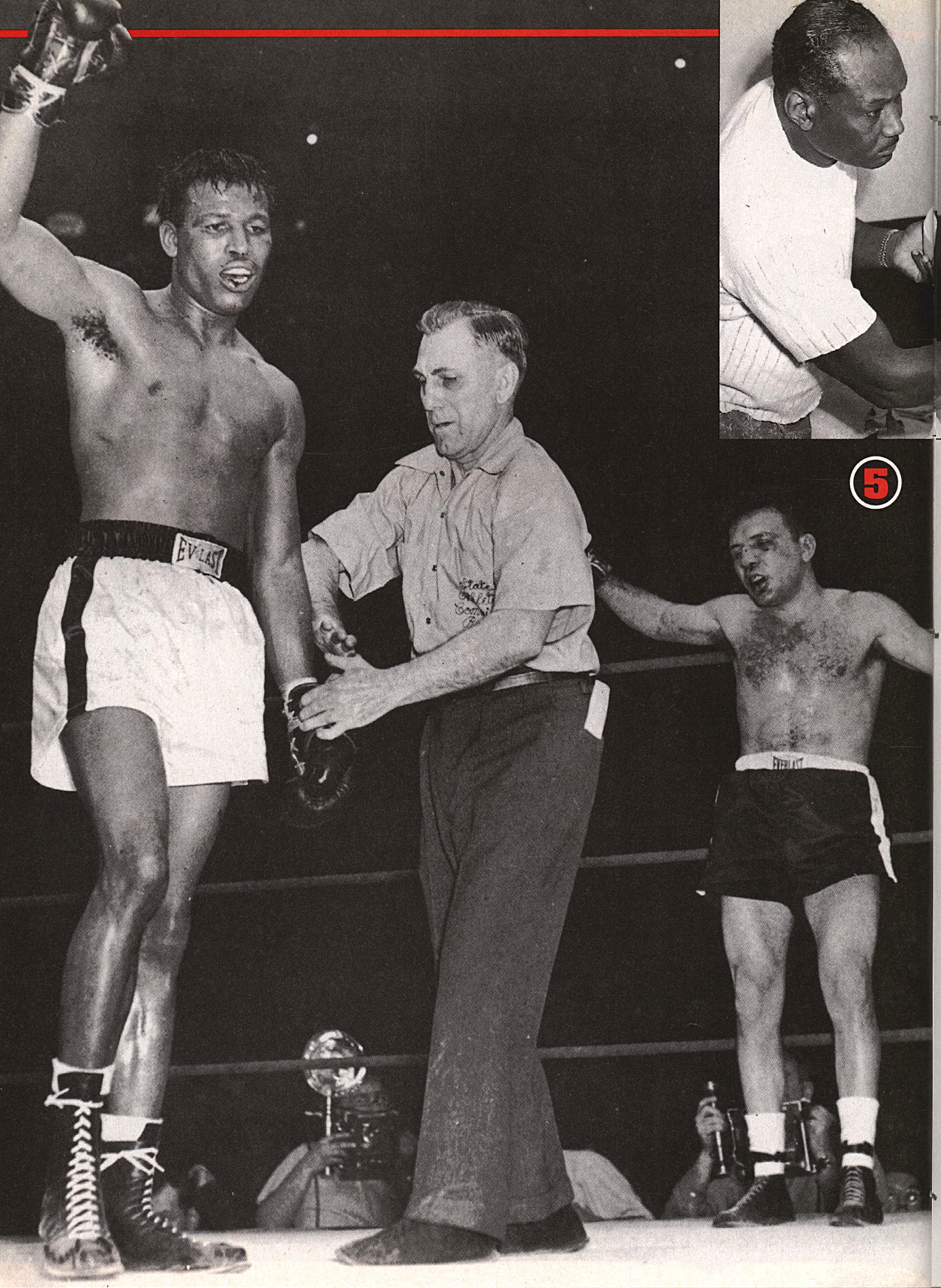
3

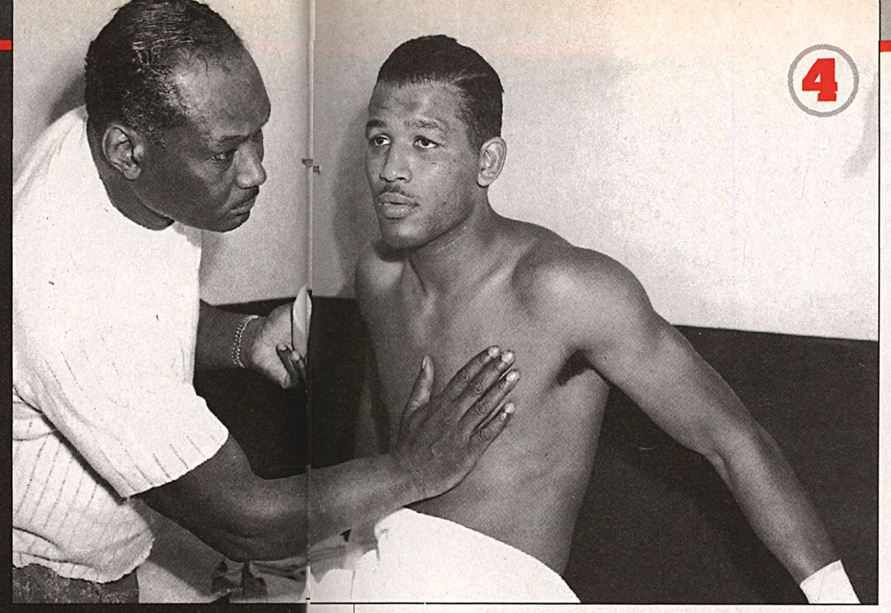
First Title:
Robinson has Tommy Bell bloody and under pressure during their December 1946 bout for the vacant world welterweight championship. Bell, a talented boxer in his own right, gave Robinson a tough fight, but in the end Sugar Ray emerged with a 15-round unanimous decision and the title.

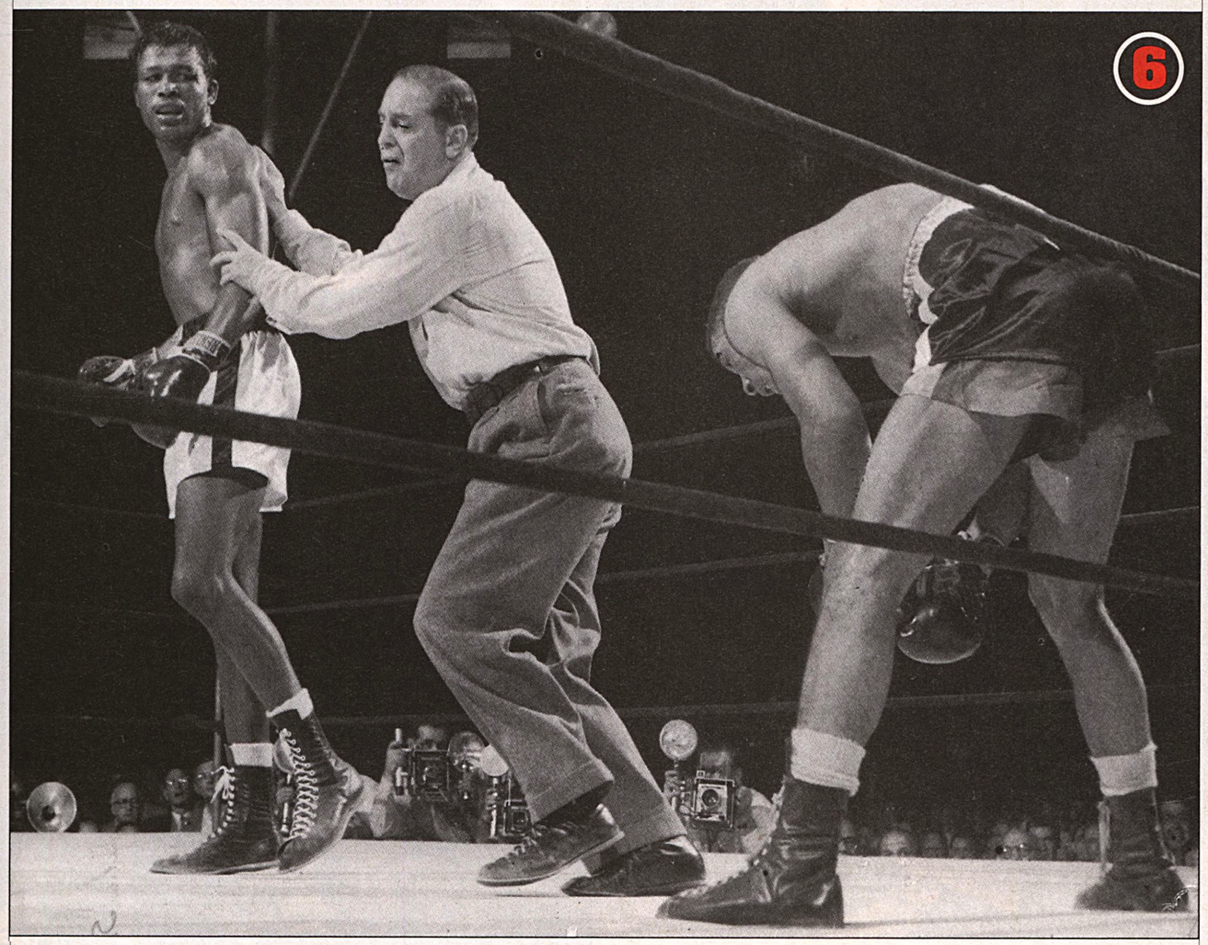




3







4

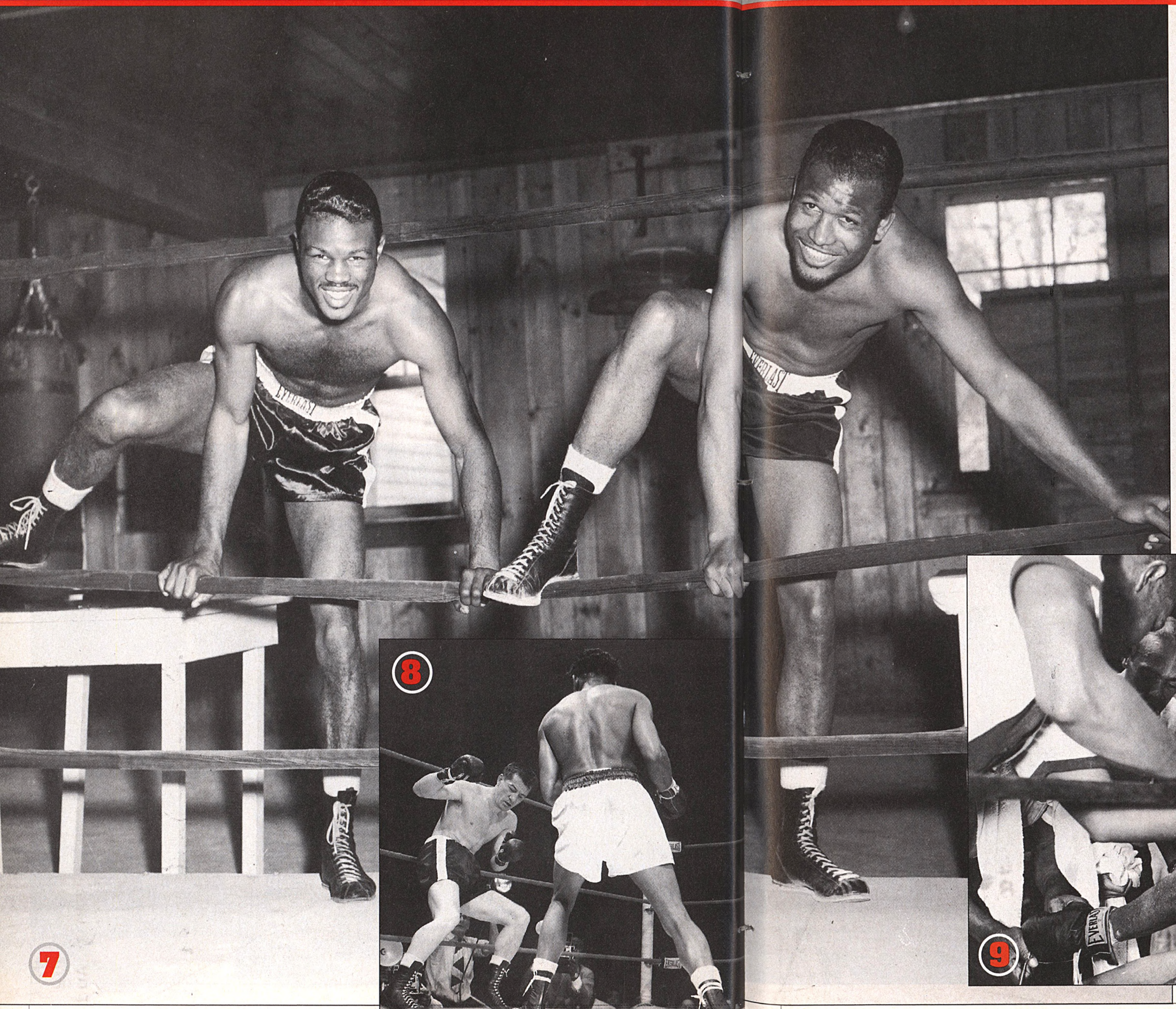
Getting Ready For Gavilan:
Manager-trainer George Gainsford applies grease to Robinson prior to a workout at his Pompton Lake, New Jersey, training camp, where Ray was prepping for his July 1949 welterweight title defense against Kid Gavilan in Philadelphia. "The Cuban Hawk" fought well, but lost a 15-round decision.

5

"The Bronx Bull" Gored:
Referee Frank Sikora reaches for Robinson's arm after stopping his February 14, 1951, fight with Jake LaMotta in the 13th round. The bout marked Robinson's first ascension to the middleweight throne in a bout that has become known as "The St. Valentine's Day Massacre."

6

Sweet Revenge:
Robinson's first reign as middleweight champion ended in his maiden defense, when Englishman Randy Turpin outpointed him in London in July 1951. Two months later, Robinson regained the title by stopping "The Leamington Licker" in the 10th round in front of 61,370 fans at New York's Polo Grounds (pictured).



7

8

9

7 There's Only One Sugar Ray:

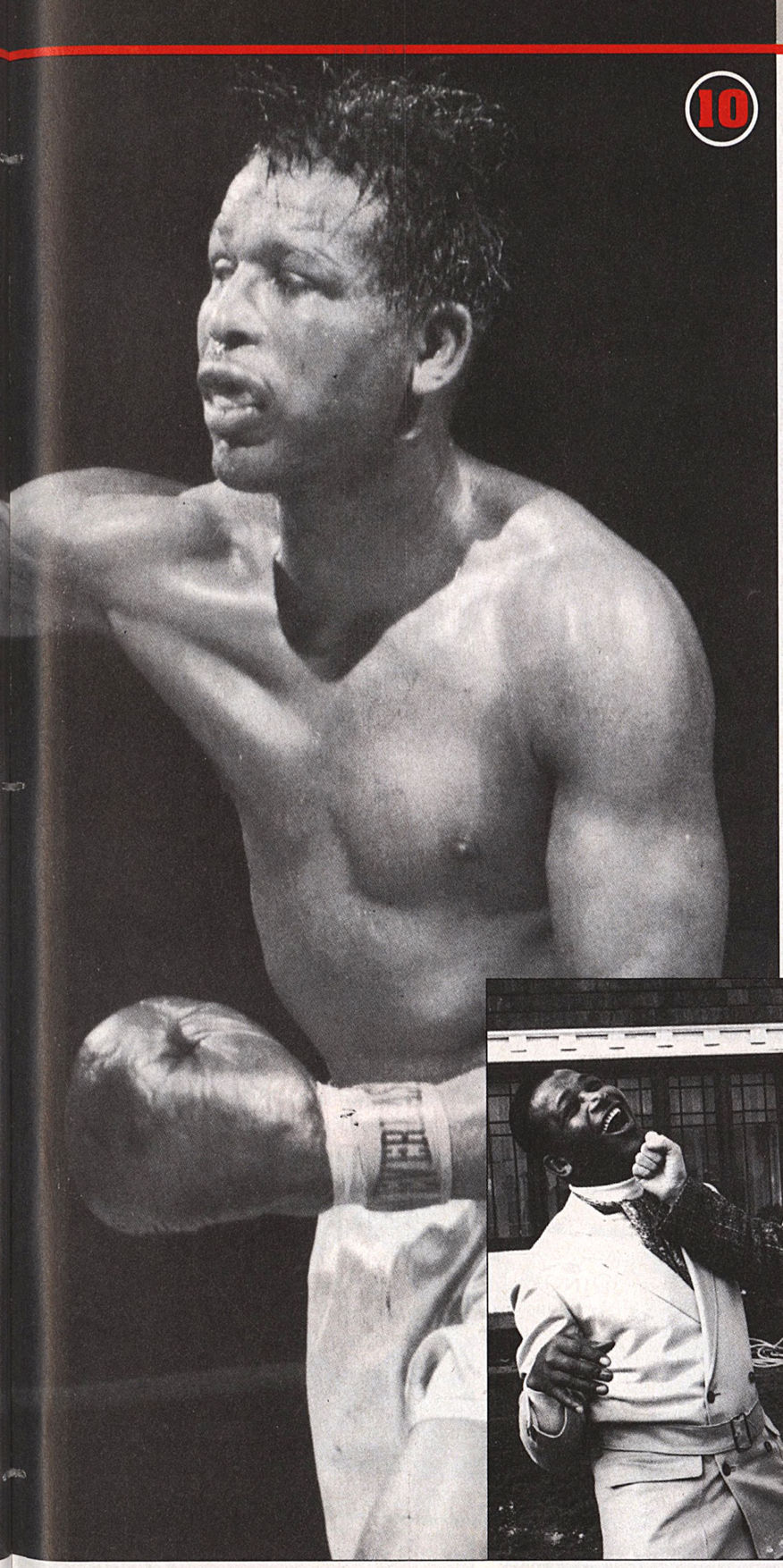
Many fighters have adopted Robinson's nickname, but none has ever equaled his virtuosity. One of those who dared to try was Philadelphian Garnet "Sugar" Hart, who is pictured on the left, climbing over the ropes with Robinson. The two Sugars certainly share a physical resemblance, but the comparison ends there.

8 The Rock Crumbles:

Former middleweight champ Rocky Graziano had Robinson on the deck during their 1952 middleweight title bout, but he couldn't keep him down. Sugar Ray easily beat the count and rallied back to kayo Graziano in the third round (pictured).

9 Meltdown At Yankee Stadium:

In June 1952, reigning middleweight champ Robinson tried to move up in weight and capture the light heavyweight title from Joey Maxim. Sugar Ray was ahead on points after 13 rounds, but the oppressive heat under the lights proved too much for him, and a totally exhausted and dehydrated Robinson was forced to quit on his stool. It was the first and only time in his career he was stopped.



10

Bashing Basilio:
Robinson had lost the 160-pound title to former welterweight champ Carmen Basilio in The Ring*'s 1957 Fight of the Year. But the following March he regained the title for the last time, avenging his defeat with a 15-round decision over Basilio (pictured). It was another thriller and Fight of the Year for 1958.*

11

Fullmer Under Fire:
In what is widely considered Robinson's last great performance, he held middleweight champion Gene Fullmer to a 15-round draw in December 1960. Many observers thought Sugar Ray had been robbed, but after losing a 15-round decision to Fullmer the following year, Robinson never again challenged for a world title, even though he kept fighting another five years.

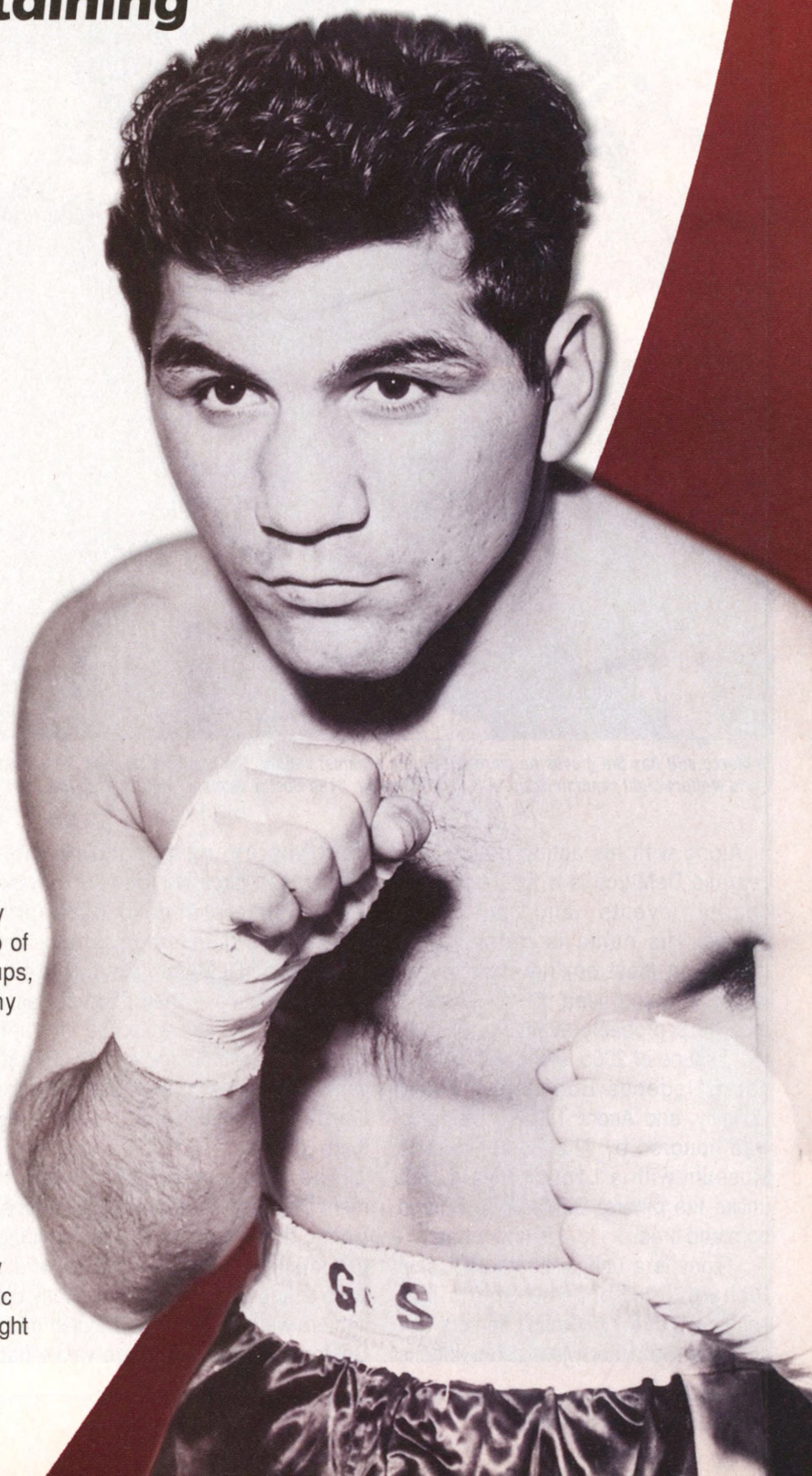
12

A Right From Ringo:
Robinson was still very popular after he retired from the ring and appeared in a number of movies and television shows. He's seen here clowning around with Beatle Ringo Starr on the set of the 1968 film Candy.

the RING UPDATE

TONY DeMarco

"I Enjoy Entertaining"



This is DeMarco as he looks today, proudly displaying his encased Ring championship belt (left), and how DeMarco looked during his heyday as world welterweight champion in 1955 (right).

By Don Stradley

It's a wet January night on Tremont Street, the heart of Boston's Theater District, and the bus-and-tunnel crowd seems to be holding out for good weather. One show, however, *Joey & Maria's Comedy Italian Wedding*, is playing to a nearly packed house. The audience, made up of bachellorette parties and tourist groups, is roaring at the crude humor. Tony DeMarco portrays the bride's father, and is the liveliest member of the conga line that closes the show. Yes, it's the same Tony DeMarco described by Carmen Basilio as "the most underrated fighter I ever came across."

DeMarco has been with the wacky show for four years. "I'd done a few summer stock roles and a lot of public speaking. You become a ham in the fight game too. So I had a little experience."

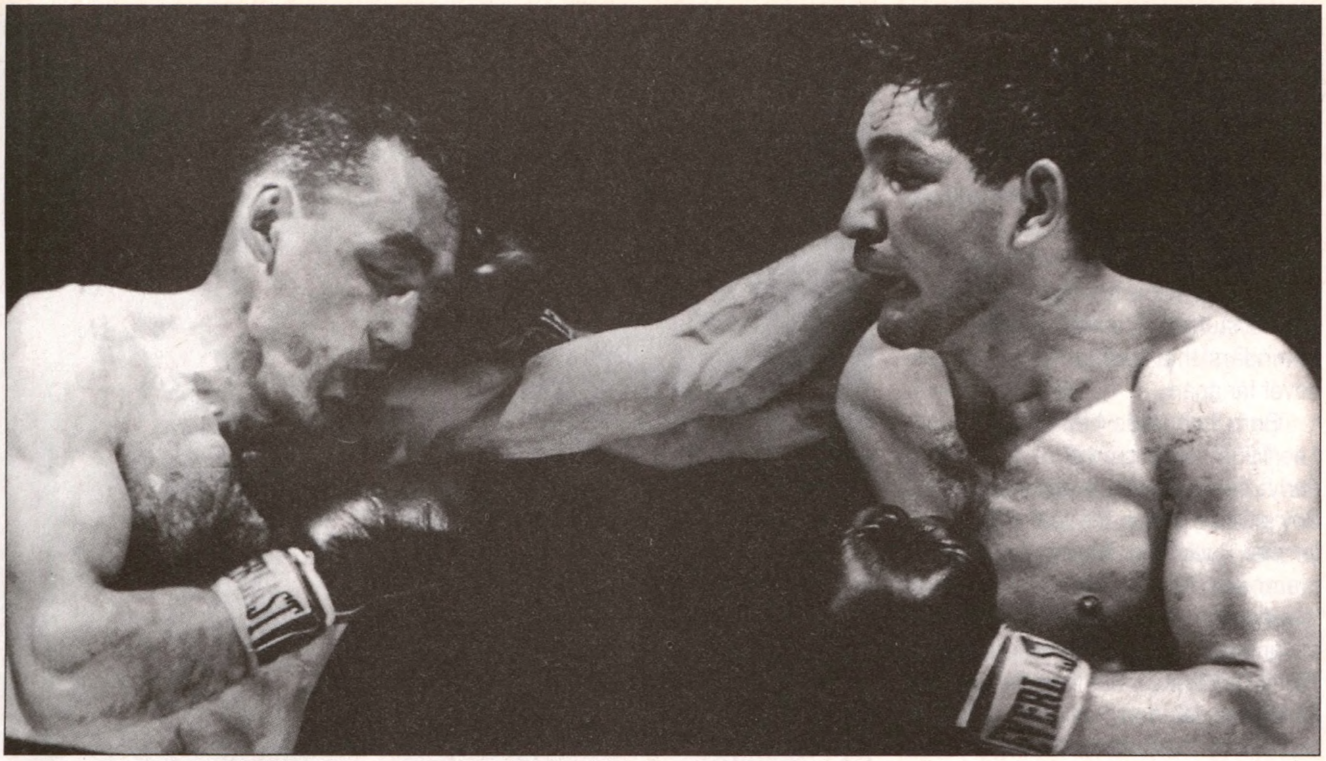
DeMarco still has the gloves he wore during his greatest victory, the night he stopped Johnny Saxton in the 14th round on April 1, 1955, to win the world welterweight championship. A 2-to-1 underdog, "The Boston Bomber" got off to a slow start, but later came on to finish Saxton via TKO.

Along with his acting duties, 74-year-old DeMarco is a fixture at local charity events and autograph shows. His name is permanently etched on most boxing event guest lists, and if you need him to launch a ship, he's probably available for that, too. In June of 2005, along with Boston sports legends Bob Cousy, Terry O'Reilly, and Andre Tippett, DeMarco was honored by The Boston Sports Museum with a Legacy Award. But unlike the others, DeMarco is Boston born and bred.

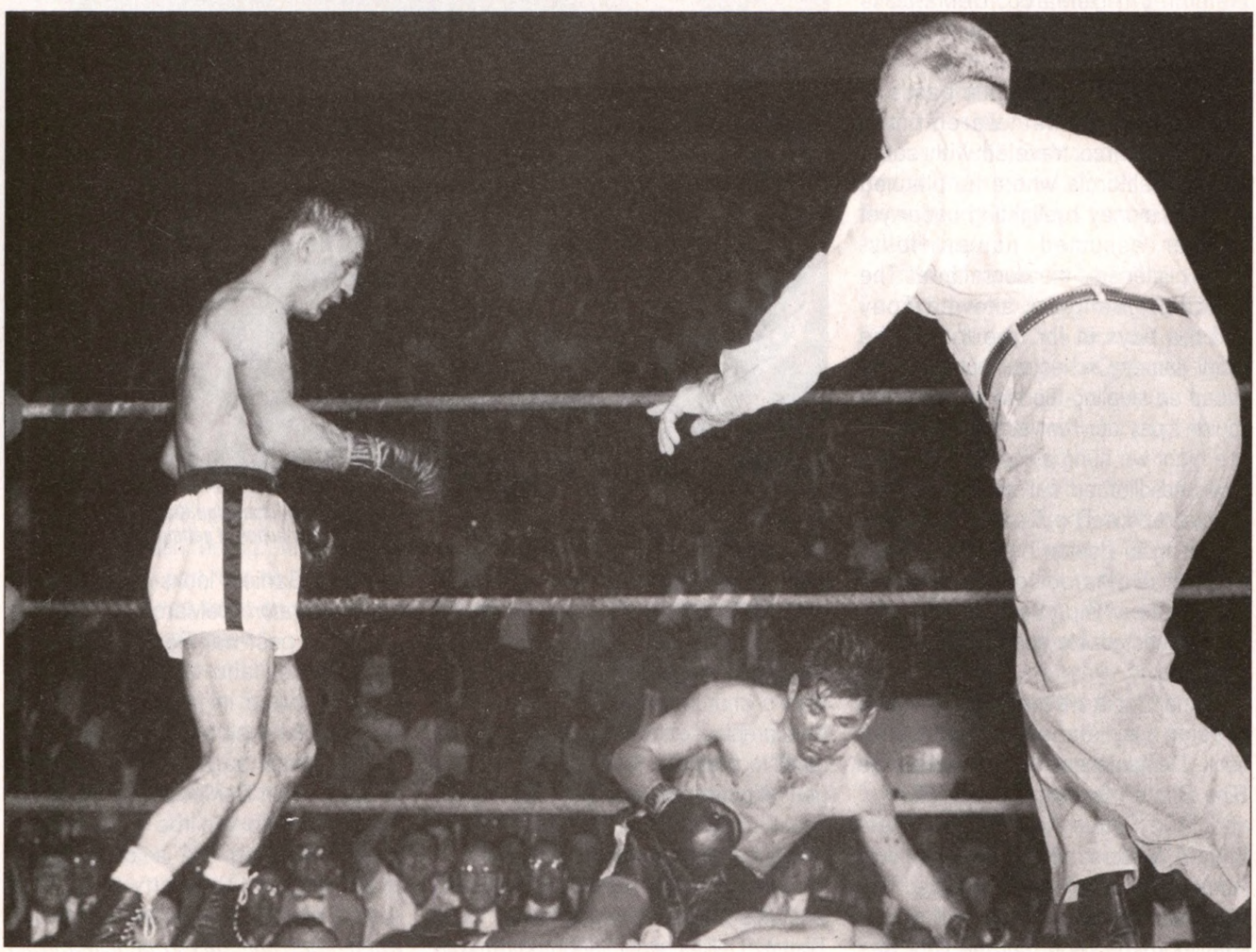
"Tony is a unique character," said Richard Johnson, The Sports Museum's curator. "Not many fighters can say they were born just a few blocks from where they won the championship." DeMarco still lives within walking distance of the TD Banknorth Garden, the old Garden's sterile replacement. DeMarco joked, "I like to stay close in case they need me as a substitute." The line would be funnier if the Garden still hosted boxing. But 50 years ago Demarco was practically the Garden's house fighter, appearing there 31 times.

The cozy West End apartment DeMarco shares with his fiancee, Dottie, doesn't seem like an ex-fighter's home. (The late Jack Newfield once asked Demarco why so many old fighters were such sweet, modest men. DeMarco replied, "Because we've had all the anger punched out of us.") It's only when DeMarco opens a closet full of awards and personal memorabilia that we get a glimpse into his past: We see framed photos of DeMarco with various celebrities and local political types, old news clippings, a painting of his friend and fellow Massachusetts champion, Rocky Marciano. In the living room there are many religious paintings, but a visitor's eye is drawn to a framed portrait of DeMarco with his daughter, Sylvia, taken when she was a toddler. DeMarco is beaming in the picture, and so is she—daddy's perfect angel.

Perched on the mantle in his bedroom are two sets of battered Everlast



A little more than three months after winning the welterweight title, DeMarco lost it to Carmen Basilio (above), despite a valiant effort by DeMarco in Syracuse, New York. Basilio finished off DeMarco again during the 12th round of their rematch (below), this time in front of DeMarco's home crowd at the Boston Garden in November '55. The Basilio-DeMarco bouts are considered two of the most exciting in welterweight history.



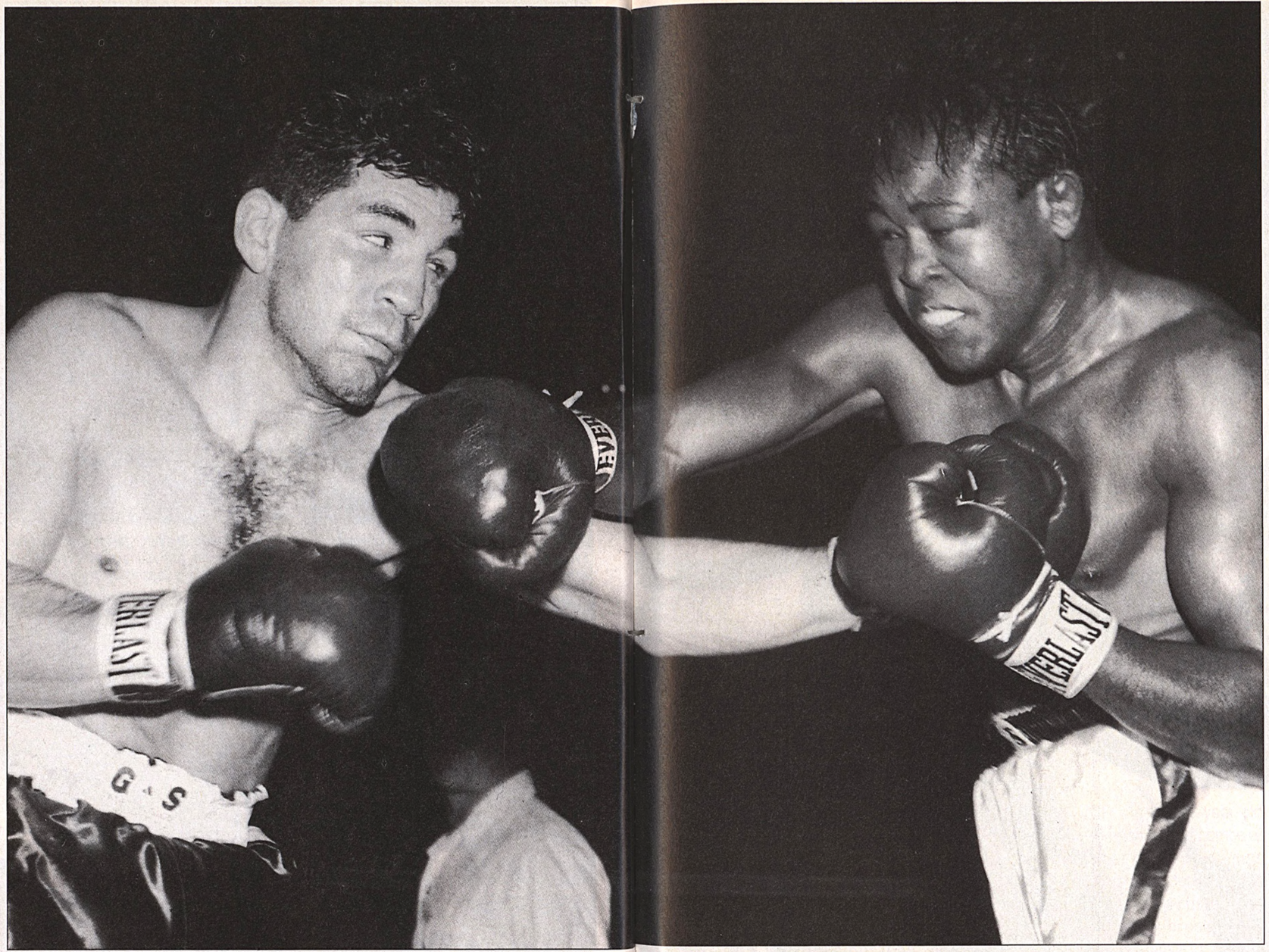
gloves. One pair was worn the night he won the championship from Johnny Saxton; the other was worn the night he lost it to Basilio. He's given away many of his souvenirs, but he's kept these gloves, faded from the original brown to a pale maroon, for five decades. "My two biggest fights," he said. They look as harmless as a child's stuffed animals, but they are reminders that triumph and loss are never far apart.

Born Leonardo Liotta on January 14, 1932, Demarco took to boxing early, sparring with friends at a local Boy's Club. "I liked the feel of it. It was for me. Back then, boxing had a lot of glamour." At 15, "Nardo" borrowed the identity of an older friend to enter an amateur tournament and became "Tony DeMarco." "But then the genuine DeMarco decided to be a boxer. He couldn't be DeMarco because I was, so he borrows the birth certificate of another neighborhood guy, Marco Tremini. I'm DeMarco, DeMarco is Tremini, and, luckily, Tremini doesn't want to fight."

At 20, his career in the hands of "likable jerks that weren't too swift," DeMarco traveled with some pals to California where he planned to make money by fighting under yet another assumed name. Hollywood glistened—the doorman at The Palladium Ballroom allowed Tony and the boys in for free to see the Harry James Orchestra—but the gang ended up stealing food to survive. "We couldn't pay our rent at the YMCA, so one night we hung a rope out the window and climbed out without paying. We were like The Dead End Kids." Returning to Boston broke and disappointed, DeMarco found a mentor in promoter "Rip" Valenti. "He was well-connected. He had me fighting on television."

Small for a welterweight but possessing a slaughterhouse left hook, DeMarco earned nicknames like "The Boston Bomber," "Little Rocky," and "The Flame And Fury Of Fleet Street." A 10-round slugfest with local journeyman Wilbur Wilson helped him become a local attraction. "I won a unanimous decision, but the fight was so spectacular we had an instant rematch." While training for the return, Demarco injured his left hand. "That was my best punch. So I went to St. Mary's Church before the rematch. The Deacon placed the holy relic on my left hand to wish me luck. I don't want to get religious on you, but that night I knocked Wilson out with a left hook. Interpret that however you want."

The time was right for DeMarco. Boston's previous boxing hero, "Irish" Tommy Collins, would soon retire. With his John Garfield looks and his North End *ammiratori,* DeMarco became the picture of post-war Boston. His parents, James and Giacomina, were often featured in local newspapers cheering for their son. The local-boy-makes-good saga exploded April 1, 1955, when DeMarco beat Saxton in the Garden to win the welterweight crown, kicking off a celebration that rocked the city for four days. DeMarco was in demand everywhere. But with Basilio penciled in as his immediate challenger, he probably should have been resting. "It was a bad move on Rip's part, but he'd made an agreement. I was thick enough to go along; I should've waited."



DeMarco notched a comeback victory against former welterweight champion Kid Gavilan in '56, but then lost consecutive split-decisions to Gaspar Ortega, ending any hopes of getting another title fight.

Sixty-nine days after winning the title, Demarco went to Syracuse where the flinty Basilio stopped him in 12 rounds. *The Boston Globe* called it "a completely unzippered demonstration of savagery." Still, DeMarco chafes at the stoppage. "It was a life and death fight. I was on my feet, and I'm a puncher. A puncher always has a chance." The riotous rematch took place in November, this time in Boston. DeMarco punched Basilio all over the ring for eight rounds, but Basilio survived to kayo DeMarco again in the 12th. "I was mad. Period. And discouraged. But boxing was my way of life."

Demarco put himself back in the spotlight with wins over Wallace "Bud" Smith (KO 9), Vince Martinez (W 10), and an aging Kid Gavilan (W 10).

"Gavilan was flashy, but I outboxed him. Every time he started that bolo punch I'd hit him with a left hook." As for Martinez, "He stopped by the gym one day to visit the promoter, Sam Silverman. I happened to be sparring. My sparring partner said, 'Hit me a shot and I'll go down.' So I hit him lightly, and my partner went down flat." Bystanders saw Martinez' face go pale. "He didn't know we faked it."

The next few years were hit and miss for DeMarco, the nadir being consecutive kayo losses to Virgil Akins. His 1960 bout with Denny Moyer was another disaster.

"The bell rang to start the first round, and we collided—boom. When I pulled away, his body was covered with blood. My blood. An artery was hit. The entire ring canvas was blotted with my blood. The reporters and cameramen had spots of blood on them. It's funny now, but it wasn't at the time." The record books read 'Moyer TKO 2,' but he hadn't even landed a decent punch, according to DeMarco.

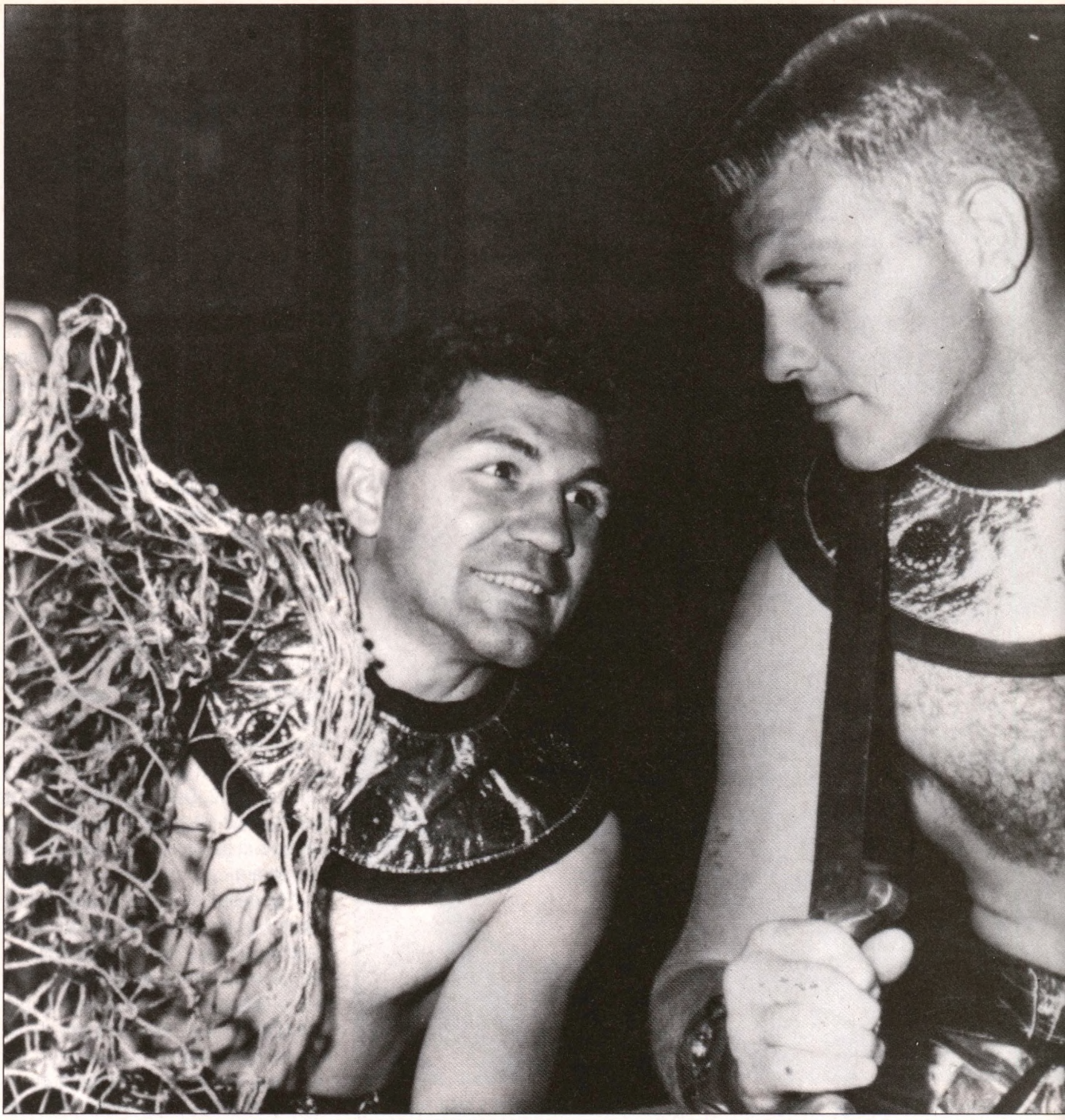
Training had become drudgery for DeMarco. A blood sugar problem caused him to tire in the late rounds. His fights were no longer drawing. He was also married with two children, Vincent and Sylvia. After winning a 10-round decision over Stefan Redl in February 1962, DeMarco retired with a record of 58-12-1 (32). For all of the fireworks in his career, he went out with little fanfare.

"He deserves to be in the Hall of Fame," said boxing historian Bert Randolph Sugar. "He took the punches and gave us two of the greatest fights of the '50s. He was a genius in his time. I don't know why he's not in. To me, it's an oversight."

"They've invited him to be a guest every year since they opened," said his fiancee, Dottie. "But they don't induct him. He's not even on the ballot. Last year they didn't even invite him, and it was the 50th anniversary of when he won the championship and fought Basilio. It's a slap in the face."

But there are worse things than not being enshrined in Canastota.

After dabbling in real estate and the restaurant business, DeMarco moved his family to Arizona, hoping the dry air would help his son's asthma. A few years later, 10-year-old Vincent was struck by a car and



DeMarco and heavyweight contender Tom McNeely pose in gladiator garb during rehearsal for a 1962 production of **Androcles And The Lion**, *which was sponsored by the Boston Arts Festival. DeMarco is still active in theater and recently appeared in a production of* **Joey & Maria's Comedy Italian Wedding.**

killed. DeMarco dealt with the tragedy by busying himself at the popular Phoenix lounge he operated for 14 years, Tony DeMarco's Living Room. He tended bar, doing whatever he could to make his life bearable after losing his son. DeMarco eventually returned to Boston where he worked as a court officer at The State House. But more trouble was on the way: His marriage ended, and then his daughter, Sylvia, was diagnosed with cancer. Sylvia was 33 when she died. For a while DeMarco said, "Why me?" There is still awe in his voice when he talks about his children, but he's learned to cope. "Everybody has bad things happen to them. And that's it."

By the late-1990s, DeMarco had become Boston's boxing mascot. A street in his old neighborhood had been named after him, and a banner hung in his honor in the Garden. Still, his sister Josephine was concerned about him. He'd retired from his court officer job and was troubled by his daughter's illness. To cheer him up, she invited Tony to join her and some friends for a night of dancing. That's when he met Dottie.

"I told my sister, 'I don't dance anymore.' But then I saw Dottie. I said,

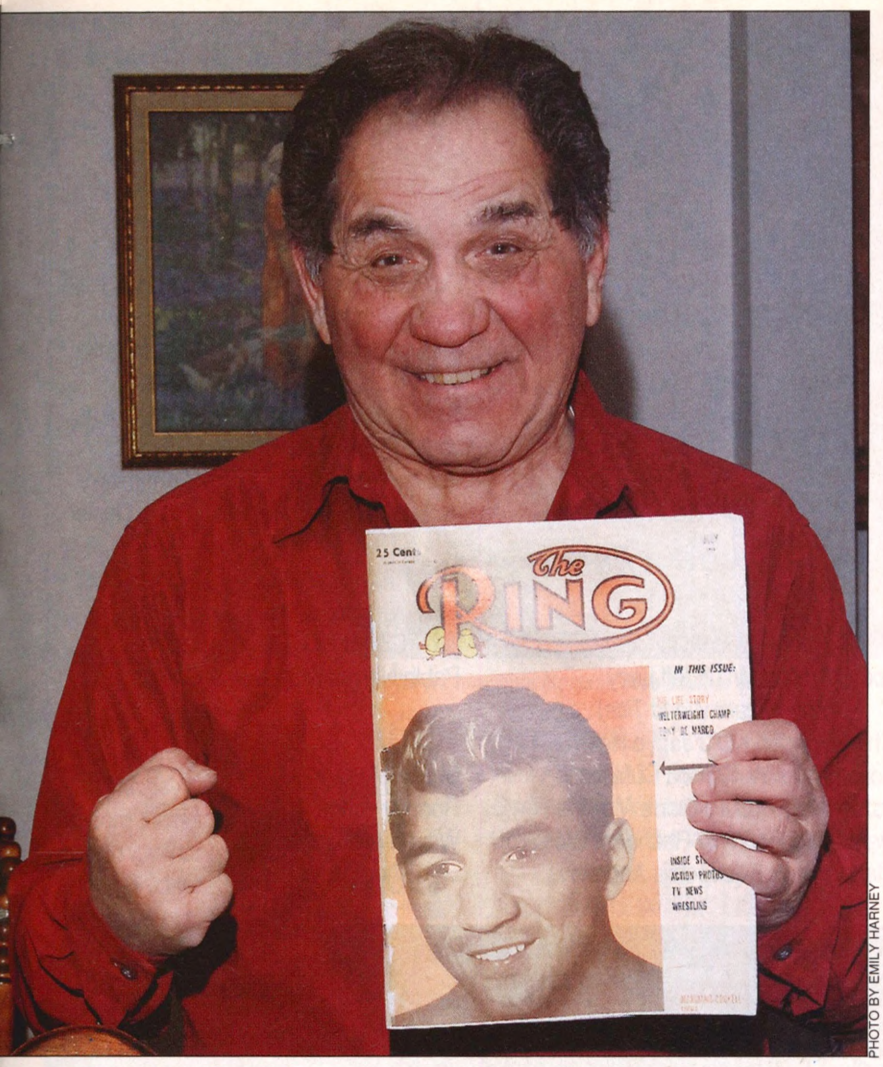


PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

DeMarco, who was featured several times on the cover of THE RING during his fighting career, has written an autobiography and is seeking a publisher. His life story is filled with colorful tales and even more colorful characters.

"Want to dance?" And we danced. We haven't stopped yet."

* * *

There's a smartly bound 200-page manuscript on DeMarco's coffee table. It's his autobiography, and it's waiting for a publisher. It deserves one. There are stories of tainted water bottles, burlesque queens, and managers flipping coins to decide a fighter's future. Frank Sinatra, Frankie Carbo, and Blinkie Palermo make cameo appearances, as do Marciano, Jake LaMotta, and a slew of fighters long forgotten. "I'm not the type to say fighters were better in those days. There were good fighters then, and good ones now. The difference is that there were *more* good fighters back then."

DeMarco slides a tape of the Saxton fight into his VCR. As the 23-year-old DeMarco hurls 25 unanswered bombs at Saxton, the 74-year-old DeMarco puts on a pair of tartan suspenders given to him by former lightweight champ Ken Buchanan. It's Saturday evening, and time for another performance of *Joey & Maria's Comedy Italian Wedding*. At the curtain call, he will be introduced as the former champion, and he will shadowbox playfully. The audience will be too young to remember the screaming thrill ride that was his career, but it won't matter.

"I enjoy entertaining," DeMarco said. "It's a pleasure to be with people, dancing, and laughing, and joking. That's the good part of life. Why lose it?" ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to this magazine.

THE 2006 The RING ALMANAC
OUR 11TH EDITION!
ON SALE NOW! Or order by mail!

☑ **YES!** I would like to order my copy of the ***2006 Ring Almanac***. I have enclosed $7 in check or money order (postage and handling included) as payment in full.

SEND TO:
London Publishing Co., P.O. Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Name_____

Address_____ Apt.____

City_____ State____ Zip_____

For orders outside the U.S., you must add $1.50 for every issue to be sent surface mail, or $3 for every issue to be sent airmail. Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. 7090

FOR SALE
The Ring Championship Boxing Belts

- Limited Edition Belts of LaMotta, Marciano, Moore, Robinson, Ortiz and others.
- Expertly crafted by the makers of all the current Ring Belts.

For further information please contact
Newport Marketing, Inc.
901 Elm Street, Colon, MI 49040
269-432-9480 Fax 269-432-9560
nptmktg@aol.com

[Summary]

Heavyweights

Hasim Rahman D 12 James Toney
(Retains WBC Title)
Calvin Brock KO 6 Zuri Lawrence
Danny Williams W 12 Matt Skelton
Henry Akinwande W 12 Cisse Salif
Ruslan Chagaev W 12 Vladimir Virchis
Michael Sprott W 10 Antoine Palatis
Javier Mora KO 7 Kirk Johnson
Shannon Briggs KO 4 Dicky Ryan
John Chapman KO 2 Marvin Hill
Lou Savarese KO 2 Marcus Rhode
Rob Calloway KO 1 Benito Fernandez
Andreas Sidon KO 2 Oleg Belikov
John Chapman KO 4 Tommy Connelly
Tony Thompson KO 4 Maurice Wheeler
Tomasz Bonin KO 1 Patriche Costel
Billy Zumbrun KO 4 Stacy Frazier
Michael Marrone W 8 Zack Page
Chazz Witherspoon KO 2 Rodney Ray

Cruiserweights

Enzo Maccarinelli W 12 Mark Hobson
Julio Dominguez KO 3 Alejandro Alvarez

Light Heavyweights

Glen Johnson W 12 Richard Hall
Goran Delic W 10 Imrich Borka
Zaur Jangubaev KO 3 Ibrahim Uzunkaya
Charles Cavallo KO 2 Jason Medina

Super Middleweights

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Jeff Lacy
(Wins Vacant World Title)
Chad Dawson KO 3 Jamie Hearn
Zoltan Kallai W 12 Ivica Cukusic
Jozsef Nagy KO 10 Pierre Moreno
Darnell Boone W 10 Rasheem Brown
Mario Veit W 8 Jevgenijs Andrejevs

Middleweights

Felix Sturm W 12 Maselino Masoe
(Wins WBA Title)
Arthur Abraham W 12 Shannan Taylor
(Retains IBF Title)
Sam Soliman KO 6 Raul Munoz
John Duddy KO 1 Shelby Pudwill
Khoren Gevor W 12 Sergey Khomitsky
Julio Cesar Vasquez W 10 Hugo Daniel Sclarandi
Toshihiko Itagaki W 10 Tetsuya Suzuki
Mahir Oral W 8 Arsen Khachatrian
Joey Gilbert KO 3 Jimmy Lange
Pablo Nievas KO 2 Jorge Garcia

Junior Middleweights

Shane Mosley KO 10 Fernando Vargas
Rodney Jones W 12 Raul Frank
Wayne Alexander W 12 Thomas McDonagh

PHOTO BY LEFTY SHIVAMBU/TOUCHLINE/GETTY IMAGES

Welterweight Malinga nails Ntshingila in the nose

Javier Mamani W 10
Claudio Ariel Abalos
Alban Mothie W 10
Woulid Guarras
Oscar Diaz KO 5
Russell Jordan
Joel Julio KO 2 Wilmer Mejia
Attila Kovacs KO 4
Ahmed Mustafa
Derek Ennis D 6
Maxwell Taylor
Derek Ennis KO 2
Roland Commings

PHOTO BY STAN HONDA/GETTY IMAGES

Junior welterweight Montano fires a left at Salita

Welterweights

Antonio Margarito KO 1
Manuel Gomez
Juan Lazcano W 10
Ben Tackie
Ricky Quiles W 8
Jeremy Yelton
Larry Mosley D 12 Miguel Figueroa
Daigoro Yamamoto KO 10
Singtothong Fulightgym
Hector Saldivia KO 4 Carlos Ariel Uribe
Luis Okamoto W 8 Takejiro Kato
Cedric Charlier W 10
Domingos Monteiro
Mike Jones KO 2 Chris Gray
Kaseem Wilson KO 1 Fred Drayton
Peter Malinga D 6 Welcome Ntshingila

Junior Welterweights

Joel Casamayor KO 5 Antonio Ramirez
Miguel Cotto KO 8 Gianluca Branco
Demetrius Hopkins W 12
Mario Jose Ramos
Almazbek Raiymkulov W Disq. 3
Jose Quintana
Willy Blain W 10 Mounir Guebbas
Miguel Callist W 10 Jorge Medrano
Hector Moreira KO 7 Pedro Verdu
Amir Khan KO 3 Jackson Williams
Dmitriy Salita D 8 Ramon Montano
Vincent Arroyo KO 4 Jose Caraballo
Rock Allen W 6 Arthur Brambila

Lightweights

Isaac Hlatshwayo W 12 Aldo Rios
Shoji Kawase Tech. Draw 10
Keiji Fukami
Matt Zegan W 8 Geoffrey Munica

Junior Lightweights

Alex Arthur W 12 Ricky Burns
Daniel Attah W 8 Isidro Granados
Edwin Valero KO 1 Whyber Garcia

Featherweights

Chris John W 12 Juan Manuel Marquez
(Retains WBA Title)
Alexander Bajawa W 12 Ricardo Walter
Nicky Cook W 12 Yuri Voronin
Ramiro Lara KO 1 Jose Miranda
Malcolm Klaasen KO 3 Lindile Tyhali
Li Jun Gao KO 6 Jonna Chowkowen
Juan Manuel Lopez W 8
Gilberto Bolanos

Junior Featherweights

Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 10
Mahyar Monshipour
(Wins WBA Title)
Ricardo Castillo W 12 Adolfo Landeros
Manabu Fukushima W 10
Kaona Klongpajol
Mike Oliver KO 9 Castulo Gonzalez
Abner Mares W 8 Omar Adorno

Bantamweights

Wladimir Sidorenko D 12
Ricardo Cordoba
(Retains WBA Title)
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 8 Mark Johnson
Sasha Baktin W 10 Yasuo Kijima
Takuro Kodama Tech. Draw 10
Hiromasa Ohashi
Felix Machado W 10 Franklin Varela
Shinnosuke Yasuda KO 6
Nongkai Patavikorngym
Dale Robinson KO 3 Delroy Spencer

Junior Bantamweights

Masamori Tokuyama W 12
Jose Navarro
(Retains WBC Title)
Mario Narvaez W 12 German Amado
Pramuansak Posuwan KO 2
Louie Bantigue

Flyweights

Vic Darchinyan KO 8 Diosdado Gabi
(Retains IBF Title)
Panomroonglek Kratingdaenggym KO 3
Rene Banares
Koki Kameda KO 6 Carlos Bouchan
Pedro Cardenas W 8 Nicolas Diaz

Junior Flyweights

Brian Viloria W 12 Jose Antonio Aguirre
(Retains WBC Title)
Luis Lazarte W 12 Adrian Rodriguez
Noel Arambulet KO 7 Darwin Zambrano

Strawweights

Yutaka Niida W 12 Ronald Barrera
(Retains WBA Title)
Ivan Calderon W 12 Isaac Bustos
Pigmy Muangchaiyaphum W 12
Richard Garcia
Katsunari Takayama Tech. Win 9
Satoshi Kogumazaka

Miguel Cotto KO 8 Gianluca Branco

Bayamon, Puerto Rico: This wasn't nearly as much fun as Cotto's previous fight, his back-and-forth war with Ricardo Torres, but it was probably a heckuva lot more enjoyable for Cotto and his handlers, as he was in with the perfect, harmless opponent, and was able to dismantle Branco without having to sweat it out. In no danger against his light-hitting, outclassed opponent, Cotto delighted the crowd at Ruben Rodriguez Coliseum by dishing out a thorough beating, handing Branco only his second loss, and his first by knockout.

Branco, 140, Civitavecchia, Italy, was a familiar name to American fight fans because of his January '04 bout against Arturo Gatti, in which he gave the beloved warrior a difficult distance fight en route to losing. Against Cotto—who most would consider a better talent than Gatti—Branco wasn't difficult and couldn't last the distance. In fact, the 35-year-old Italian probably didn't win a round.

As usual, Cotto, 140, Caguas, Puerto Rico, boxed behind a tight guard and employed a mix of counterpunching and careful stalking. He never gave Branco much in the way of openings, and he seemed to do a little bit more with each passing round, making it an increasingly painful affair with his headshots and bodywork. Cotto was punching quite a bit to the arms, and Branco found himself shaking out those arms periodically throughout the fight.

In the fourth and fifth rounds, the 25-year-old Cotto's left hook to the head began doing real damage, and a clash of heads that left Branco with a small cut on his scalp didn't make the visitor's night any easier. Branco occasionally did well with the jab, but he was always wary of the counter shots.

Heading into the eighth, Branco looked just about ready to surrender, and it didn't take long for Cotto to give him a reason. The Puerto Rican landed a heavy left hook to the right shoulder, and Branco, 36-2-1 (19) grabbed his shoulder in anguish, turning away from his opponent and indicating that he couldn't go on. Referee Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) officially waved off the bout at 49 seconds of the eighth.

Cotto moved to 26-0 (22) and advanced to a June fight at Madison Square Garden against slick, tough-talking Paulie Malignaggi. It will probably be a trickier challenge than the one presented by Branco, but Cotto still rates to be a solid favorite to remain undefeated and position himself for a superfight.

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(3-4-06)

Chris John W 12 Juan Manuel Marquez

Borneo, Indonesia: Unbeaten "Dragon" John, 125, Semarang, Indonesia, successfully defended the WBA featherweight title for the fifth time when he scored a surprising unanimous decision over former titleholder Marquez, 125, in what was supposed to be a formality for the Mexican to reclaim one of the belts that had been stripped from him. Marquez had taken the fight for a purse of only $31,250 after failing to secure much more lucrative matches with Manny Pacquiao and Erik Morales. Little did he know John would prove just as difficult for him to handle as those two superstars.

Both fighters started tentatively, trading jabs and moving out of range. The bout quickly settled into a tactical battle, and in round two, Marquez, 32, landed a stiff right to the head followed by a right to the body, the first meaningful blows of the bout.

John, 26, contin-

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Feather fisted Branco was no match for Cotto

ued to implement his strategy of jabbing, moving side-to-side, and flurrying when an opportunity presented itself. In round four, Marquez scored with a crisp left hook, but John retaliated and landed his best punch of the fight—a crunching counter right uppercut.

In the sixth round, both fighters traded unintentional low blows, but no warnings were issued by referee Guillermo Perez Pineda (Panama) and the chess match continued. Marquez came out in round eight and landed another unintentional low blow, this time receiving a warning from the referee.

Marquez opened round 10 with a borderline punch to the thick waistband of John, and the referee immediately jumped in and deducted a point. Just seconds later, Marquez landed yet another low blow. After receiving a warning, he backed off, fearful of losing another point.

In the 11th, Marquez, looking desperate, came out quickly and landed a crushing uppercut to the jaw of the Indonesian. He followed up with a blatant low blow, and referee Pineda stepped in again and deducted a second point. Marquez stayed composed and kept after John, 38-0 (20), landing a three-punch combination to end of the round.

In the final stanza, Marquez snuck in a crisp uppercut

PHOTO BY SCOTT MALLON

John (left) upset Marquez in WBA featherweight title bout

before tripping on the ring ropes. He pressed forward until John landed a huge right uppercut counter to punctuate the victory. The Indonesian danced out of danger for the last 60 seconds of the fight, and at the sound of the bell, his entire

[THE RING Fighter of the Month]

Presented by EVERLAST

Joe Calzaghe

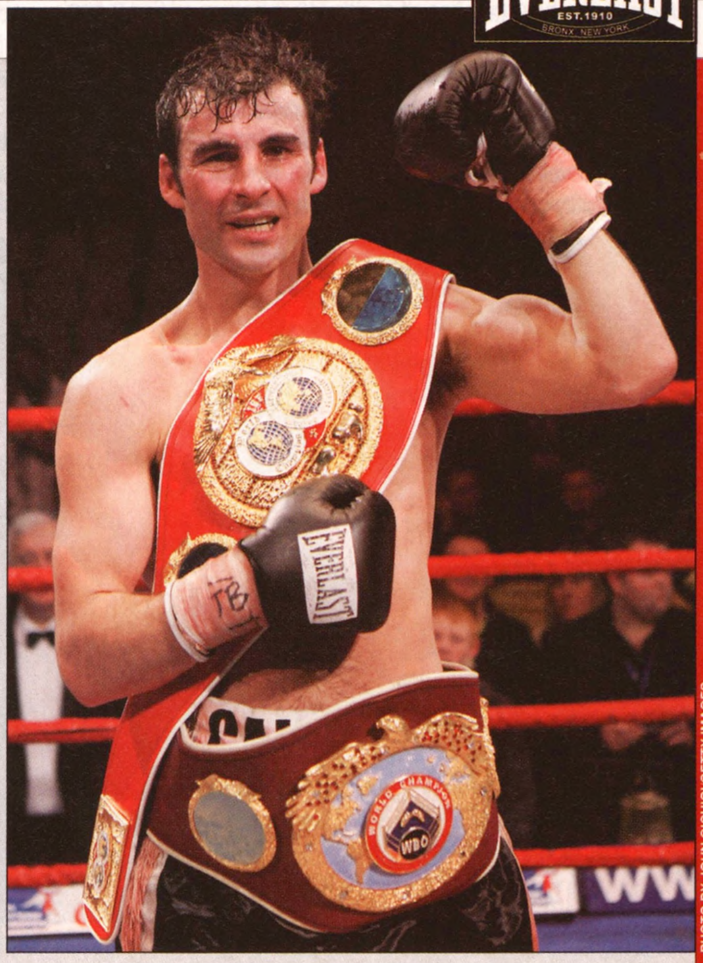


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

We pretty well figured that whoever won the Joe Calzaghe-Jeff Lacy bout was going to be our Fighter of the Month. The stakes were high (a vacant RING title was up for grabs), the fighters were elite. There simply wasn't another fight as important in all of February or March. As long as the result wasn't too controversial, the victor was sure to get a write-up on this page.

How are these scores for not-too-controversial: 119-105, 119-107, 119-107. And that's after factoring in the questionable point Calzaghe had deducted in the 11th round. This was one of the all-time dominant performances among fights that seemed hard to pick on paper. This was a fighter who had sometimes shown a tendency to fight down to the level of his opposition shocking everyone with just how exaggeratedly he fought up to and above the level of his opposition on this night. Save for the fact that Calzaghe didn't have the power to produce a knockout against his rock-jawed adversary, this was a perfect performance.

Calzaghe is the first-ever 168-pound RING champion. And if he keeps fighting anything like this, that title figures to remain his for a while.

team jumped into the ring to hoist him upon their shoulders.

Judge Oscar Perez scored the bout 116-110 (the same as THE RING), Takeshi Shimakawa had it 117-111, and Pinij Prayadsub saw it 116-112.

"Chris John is a very good fighter, but I think I did enough to win the fight," said a dejected Marquez, 44-3-1 (33). "Three or four times I hurt him, but every time I would hurt him, the referee would step in and stop the fight. After the referee took the point away in round 10, I was scared to throw any more bodypunches."

Promoter: **Muhammad Arsyad Promotion**

(3-4-06)

Scott Mallon

Masamori Tokuyama W 12 Jose Navarro

Osaka, Japan: The first time Navarro went to Asia to challenge for a title, he came back screaming robbery. After his second try, he came home with little to say except that he had been outboxed.

Many perceived Navarro's January '05 loss to Katsushige Kawashima as a ripoff, but he didn't get an immediate rematch; instead, he waited while Tokuyama dethroned Kawashima, and against the slick-punching and quick-moving Tokuyama, 115, Japan, 2000 U.S. Olympian Navarro, 114¾, Los Angeles, California, didn't fare so well. Tokuyama retained the WBC 115-pound belt by a unanimous decision over 12 fast rounds, with official scores of 117-113 from Bob Logist (Belgium) and 116-113 from both Guido Cavalleri (Italy) and John Keane (England).

It was a technical fight between sharpshooters, but Tokuyama, 31, displayed better precision in continually hitting the mark with well-timed rights to the face. Navarro, 24, showed his durability and gameness, but seemed greatly frustrated with Tokuyama's elusiveness. The Californian made a surge in the 10th and 11th, but it wasn't enough to overcome his early deficit on points.

Navarro got off to a fast start with impressive combinations early in the first round, but Tokuyama quickly found his range, throwing sharp jabs and landing good left-right combos. Before the first round was over, Navarro sustained a cut over the right eyebrow, caused by a punch from the titleholder. The lefty challenger seemed to take the second round with activity alone, as Tokuyama threw few punches.

Tokuyama, making his first defense since recapturing the belt from Kawashima last July, was in command in the third through seventh rounds, as he often countered the onrushing Californian with right hands. When Navarro tried to respond, Tokuyama quickly moved to and fro to nullify his foe's combinations.

The eighth saw Navarro turn up the aggression, but in round nine Tokuyama outclassed the willing mixer with sharp jabs and one-two combos. Navarro kept stalking in the 10th, but Tokuyama, throwing nothing but a few light jabs, kept the round close with his excellent defense. Aware that he was behind on points, Navarro upped his output in the 11th, but still had trouble catching his opponent.

The 12th round was Tokuyama's best, as he landed a right that rocked the game challenger near the ropes. But the titlist couldn't follow up due to his fatigue, and the bell soon came to rescue both weary men.

Navarro, 23-2 (11), was an exemplary loser, accepting the decision and never complaining of anything to the referee. Instead, Navarro said to referee Mark Green (England) afterward, "You're a good referee. I appreciate it. Thank you." His face was bruised around the eyes, the result of Tokuyama's accurate rights. Tokuyama's reflexes were so superb that he seldom took Navarro's shots all night.

"I may go up to the bantam class, or hang up the gloves for good. Please give me three months before I make an ultimate decision," said Tokuyama, 32-3-1 (8), after this fine showing.

(2-27-06)

Joe Koizumi

PHOTO BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Tokuyama handled Navarro much easier in their rematch

Jhonny Gonzalez KO 8 Mark Johnson

Las Vegas, Nevada: Former champion Johnson's nickname is "Too Sharp," and against Gonzalez he did have some moments of sharpness. But he didn't have nearly as many of them as he used to in his prime, and Gonzalez, a decade younger and five

inches taller, controlled most of the fight and then got the knockout win in a counterpunching, technical affair.

Johnson, 119½, Washington, D.C., weighed a pound-and-a-half over the weight limit, so the fight was not for the alphabet bantamweight belt that Gonzalez, 117, Mexico City, Mexico, holds. Johnson's weight suggested he wasn't in tip-top shape, and his 17 months of inactivity since losing to Ivan Hernandez didn't help either.

In round one, both boxers were looking for an opening, but the fans at the Mandalay Bay Events Center weren't happy, booing them from the first bell. That really wasn't fair because their skills were apparent and they were setting up their plan of attack. In the second, a left hook followed by a right hand rocked Johnson, but he stayed on his feet and fought back.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Referee Kenny Bayless counts out Johnson

Johnson, 34, once a dominant flyweight and junior bantam, was trying hard to catch Gonzalez as he came forward, but the 5'8" Gonzalez, 24, kept his hands high and didn't really let Johnson get off any significant shots. Three slapping left hooks from Gonzalez put Too Sharp down in the fourth round, but he got up and traded with Gonzalez to finish the round.

Johnson revealed his champion's heart in the fifth, clearly winning the round with his crisp right jab, but over the next couple of rounds he started to tire, and Gonzalez, 32-4 (28), was able to land his right hands at will.

Johnson, 44-5 (28), showed a trace of his slickness that once made him one of the best fighters in the world, but by the eighth, it was all Gonzalez again. He hit Johnson with a clean left hook to the body, then one to the chin that sent him down for the second time.

Johnson looked over at his father-trainer Ham Johnson and then made a half-hearted attempt to rise, but was still in a crouch when referee Kenny Bayless (USA) waved the fight off at 1:08 of the round. After the fight, Johnson spoke very frankly about retirement, saying he might like to do a farewell fight next.

With the win, Gonzalez set up a fight with Rafael Marquez that the fans, especially their fellow countrymen, would love to see.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Golden Boy Promotions, Main Events**
(2-25-06)
Wayne McCullough

Calvin Brock KO 6 Zuri Lawrence

Las Vegas, Nevada: When you're boxing on the undercard of a big fight like Shane Mosley-Fernando Vargas, you want to look good so the fans remember you. In this sixth-round kayo win over journeyman Lawrence, undefeated heavyweight contender Brock look ordinary and sensational all at once. Both fighters showed little action for most of the bout, but all was forgiven when Brock landed a massive shot to end the fight spectacularly.

A 2000 Olympian nicknamed "The Boxing Banker," Brock started slowly, allowing his opponent to use his two-inch height and reach advantage to keep Brock, 231, Charlotte, North Carolina, at long range. Lawrence, 232, Wappinger Falls, New York, amazingly—especially in the heavyweight division—doesn't have one knockout on his 35-fight record. He tried hard, though, to land some good solid left and right hooks to Brock's midsection in the first four rounds, and he was connecting with frequency. But as soon as he stopped punching, Brock would land his own accurate uppercuts to Lawrence's chin.

The fans at the Mandalay Bay Events Center were not happy with either fighter, and they booed the performance.

Lawrence was awkward, and Brock, 31, really couldn't get any serious punches going for the first five rounds. The sixth round started much like the others, with Lawrence, 35, looking for the big shot that he doesn't naturally possess. Near the end of the round, Lawrence, 20-11-4 (0), landed a left hook to his opponent's head, but Brock, 28-0 (22), hit back with a left hook of his own that connected on the perfect spot on Lawrence's chin, putting him down and out at the 2:58 mark. Referee Jay Nady (USA) didn't need to count, as Lawrence was already out before he hit the canvas. He got to his feet after about five minutes and seemed to be fine.

Brock has the big punch needed in the heavyweight division, but his boxing skills and flat-footed stance will

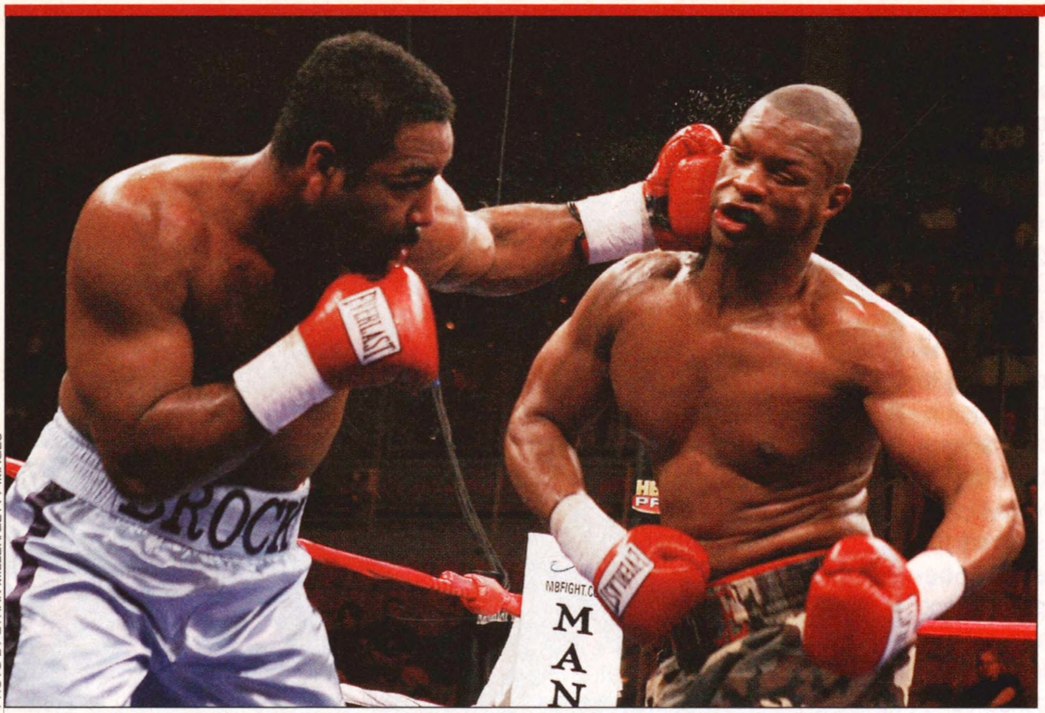


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

All it took was one left hook from Brock to kayo Lawrence

have to be worked on before the top-10 heavyweight fights for a major championship.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Golden Boy Promotions, Main Events**
(2-25-06)
Wayne McCullough

Vic Darchinyan KO 8 Diosdado Gabi

Santa Ynez, California: They call Darchinyan "The Raging Bull," but Jake LaMotta didn't often punch like this. After eight fairly close rounds against little-known but tough and hungry Filipino challenger Gabi at the Chumash Casino Resort, Darchinyan connected with a Knockout-of-the-Year-type shot, a sudden southpaw left that flattened Gabi as if hit by a heavyweight. The victory marked his third defense of the IBF flyweight title—and not surprisingly, they've all come by knockout.

Fellow southpaw Gabi, 111, Davao City, Philippines, showed considerable craft early, outjabbing and outslicking Darchinyan, 112, Sydney, Australia, in spots despite giving up 3½ inches in height to the 5'5½" titlist. The 26-year-old Gabi, riding a 12-fight winning streak coming in, had never been knocked out before, and when he got caught by Darchinyan's heavy leather sporadically in the early rounds, he handled it well.

Darchinyan, 30, fights in an awkward manner, with very little rhythm and seemingly heavy feet. But his heavier blows carried several of the rounds, and heading into the eighth, the Aussie (by way of Armenia) may have inched out to a slight lead. Whether he had or hadn't became academic at 2:42 of the eighth, when the crushing left hand came over Gabi's right shoulder and collided with his jaw, dropping him hard. Gabi, 26-3-1 (18), somehow got up from his first professional knockdown, but referee David Mendoza (USA) wisely called off the fight.

"Gabi was glassy-eyed and his equilibrium was off," Mendoza explained afterward.

"He is a really good fighter with an impressive jab," Darchinyan, 25-0 (20) said of his fallen foe. "I saw he was tough after the first few rounds, so I started to move around more and wait for openings. I gained more power with each round and felt stronger as the fight progressed."

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Gary Shaw Productions**
(3-3-06)

Yutaka Niida W 12 Ronald Barrera

Tokyo, Japan: WBA 105-pound titlist Niida, 104, barely kept his belt as he earned a unanimous decision over Colombian Barrera, 105, over 12 lousy rounds. Some 2,000 fans were in attendance at the Korakuen Hall, where they watched a monotonous and highly disappointing affair. The official scores were as follows: Jean Francois Toupin (France) 117-111, Wansoo Yuh (Korea) 116-112, and Chalerm Prayadsab (Thailand) 115-112, all in favor of Niida. The referee was Derek Milham (Australia), who did a fine job and had by far the best night of any of the three men in the ring.

The 21-year-old Colombian kept punching all fight, but seldom caught the defensive and negative titleholder, who seemed content to backpedal, avert the challenger's rallies, and flurry with solid and accurate punches at the end of each round to try to steal a point. Niida's tactics worked on the judges, but the fight was extremely close through the first 10 rounds—which was why Niida's manager, Mitsunori Seki, encouraged him to attack in the last two rounds. Niida, 27, did precisely that, earning the verdict in a bout that otherwise would have been dangerously close.

What happened to Niida? Why was he so lazy (or economical) in throwing punches? Was he feeling ill? Nobody could understand why he gave such a lackluster performance. The result itself wasn't controversial, but it was clearly Niida's worst showing in his four defenses of his second reign as beltholder.

Niida, a hard-hitting counterpuncher, won three of the first four rounds by landing a fair number of his trademark left hooks, but he inexplicably forgot to throw punches in rounds

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Niida drills Barrera with a left en route to lackluster decision win

five and six. Barrera punched with little accuracy, but he did win a few rounds clearly, most notably the eighth and 10th, which he dominated with his whirlwind attack.

Had it ended after the 10th, it might have been recorded as the very worst title bout ever held in Japan. But Niida's surge in the 11th and 12th saved the affair from that distinction. Niida caught the less experienced Colombian with big left hooks and solid straight rights to score two valuable points down the stretch.

"I feel sorry not to be able to show a good performance," Niida, 20-1-3 (8), said. "It was difficult to handle such an aggressive opponent."

Barrera, 14-2-1 (8), claimed, "I thought I won. Niida was just an ordinary boxer. I wasn't impressed by his way of fighting."

Promoters: **Teiken Promotions, Yokohama Hikari Promotions**

(3-4-06)

Joe Koizumi

Arthur Abraham W 12 Shannan Taylor

Oldenburg, Germany: Miss Germany Isabell Knispel, whom Abraham had helped elect a few weeks earlier, presented the German flag during the playing of the national anthem, a role that was almost as taxing as the IBF middleweight titleholder's. From the opening bell, Abraham, 159½, Berlin, Germany, via Yerevan, Armenia, dominated Taylor, Wollongong, Australia, winning every round and retaining the title (stripped from Jermain Taylor) that he claimed by stopping Kingsley Ikeke in the fifth round last December.

The crowd of 4,000 inside the EWE Arena sat in thrall of the 26-year-old's masterful display. Well-schooled by German trainer Ulli Wegner, Abraham controlled the bout with his jab and pinpoint punches in combination. In and out faster than the undeserving Taylor was able to even contemplate countering, the Armenian (who recently applied for German citizenship) was not caught by a single notable blow throughout the 12 rounds.

"I did my best, but I just wasn't prepared to combat a guy like Arthur. He's a really good fighter and a good champion," said Taylor, who lost to Sugar Shane Mosley in his only other major title fight, in March 2001.

The Australian proved tough after boasting that he would have to be carried out of the ring should he lose, but toughness was about all he had. Arthur's long left jab was a devastating weapon, and he stepped in behind it early in the open-

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/GETTY IMAGES

Abraham (left) had no problems outpointing Taylor

ing round to rip in powerful combinations before stepping back out again. This became the pattern of the fight. Taylor was too preoccupied with attempting to minimize the damage to mount any sustained offense. Nicknamed "The Bulli Blaster," after the beach town in New South Wales in which he was born, Taylor understood that his mission here was to withstand the blasts of Abraham instead.

This he achieved, largely through Abraham being satisfied by boxing his way to victory. But Taylor's resistance was admirable, for only Britain's Howard Eastman and Canada's Ian Gardner had taken Abraham the distance previously. In the fourth round, Taylor was hurt by a series of hard rights and lefts but survived, and in the sixth, American referee Wayne Kelly deducted a point from his total for repeated low punching. But this was only academic. By the midway point, Taylor, 42-5-2 (28), was on the wrong end of a shutout, and Abraham did not relent.

Only Taylor's heart and conditioning kept him on his feet. Abraham, 20-0 (17), rocked him again in the ninth with a strong right to the jaw and a further two-fisted assault. He did leave openings, but Taylor was never in position, nor of a mind, to take advantage. Hearing the final bell ring was triumph enough. The judges' scorecards proved predictable. Luca Montella (Italy) and Harry Davis (USA) both scored 120-107, while John Wright (Australia) had it 120-106, all for Abraham. THE RING also saw it 120-106 for Abraham.

"This was a difficult fight because Shannan showed a lot of heart," said a gracious Abraham afterward. "I wanted to end it early, but he defended well. I'm a little sad that I was unable to get the knockout."

Abraham's next bout could take place in the United States, with HBO reportedly interested in televising.

Promoter: **Wilfried Sauerland**

(3-4-06)

Brian Doogan

Antonio Margarito KO 1 Manuel Gomez

Las Vegas, Nevada: If the goal was to make a statement that Margarito would make a worthy adversary for the biggest star in the welterweight division, Floyd Mayweather, then mission accomplished. Gomez wasn't supposed to derail Margarito, but he was supposed to provide a respectable challenge, and instead he provided just a 74-second workout as the WBO 147-pound beltholder disposed of him in short order at the Aladdin Hotel to confirm his standing as the most deserving contender in the division.

This battle of Mexicans seemed like a decent fight on paper, making it somewhat of a surprise that Showtime had passed on the fight, leading Bob Arum to put it on pay-per-view instead. But maybe the Showtime execs knew what they were doing, as this turned out to be a wipeout. "Shotgun" Gomez, 147, Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, actually landed the first quality shot, a quick left hook that inspired Margarito, 146½, Tijuana, Mexico, to get aggressive in return. Margarito moved in and landed some solid one-twos, and then the exchanges began, both fighters swinging somewhat crudely, but both landing good blows. Just about a minute into the fight, Margarito, 27, connected with a jolting left to the jaw, and a quick right hand followed, causing a dazed Gomez, 33, to drop his hands and back into the ropes.

There, another right found a home, and down went Gomez, laid out on his left side. Referee Richard Steele (USA) reached the count of six, and then waved off the contest, at which time Gomez quickly popped (on unsteady legs) and protested. But it was all over at just 1:14 of the round.

"This show was called 'Real Warriors,' but I wasn't allowed to lose like a warrior," said Gomez, 28-11-2 (19), after suffering

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Margarito crushed Gomez in the opening round

his first loss since 1998. "I don't think the referee would have stopped it that quickly had it been Margarito down first."

Maybe not, but it wasn't Margarito who went down. It was Margarito who *landed* the key punches.

"He said he could get up, and maybe he could have," acknowledged Margarito, 33-4 (24) with 1 no-contest. "But after he sees the knockdown on tape, I think he'll feel differently."

A summer bout with Mayweather is now being discussed for "Tono," provided Mayweather wins his April fight with Zab Judah, and provided a more lucrative and less dangerous fight doesn't come along for "Pretty Boy."

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Viloria (left) had a tougher time with Aguirre than anticipated

Promoter: **Top Rank**
(2-18-06)

Brian Viloria W 12 Jose Antonio Aguirre

Las Vegas, Nevada: Viloria and Aguirre arrived at 108 pounds from different places—Viloria having dropped from 112 to win the WBC junior fly belt, Aguirre having risen from 105, where he reigned as a beltholder for nearly four years. And they arrived at this fight at very different stages of their careers—2000 U.S. Olympian Viloria still on the rise at just 25 years of age, Mexican Aguirre on the slide at age 30, having been kayoed in his previous two bouts. Despite these differences, they came into the ring at the Aladdin Hotel quite evenly matched, at least based on the evidence of their competitive 12-round bout, which Viloria won by unanimous decision.

Making his first defense of the alphabet strap he won via first-round kayo of Erick Ortiz last September, Viloria, 107, Waipahu, Hawaii, had an excellent first round, looking momentarily like he might repeat the feat he managed versus Ortiz. But Aguirre, 107½, Tabasco, Mexico, stood his ground in the second, and suddenly Viloria realized he was in a real fight. It got worse for "The Hawaiian Punch" in round three, as Aguirre backed him into the ropes late in the round and fired off several strong, unanswered punches, prompting referee Tony Weeks (USA) to look in closely. Aguirre didn't relent in the ensuing rounds, seemingly building a lead through seven rounds, while Viloria struggled to adjust to the challenge in front of him.

From the eighth round on, however, Aguirre, 33-5-1 (20), lacked the energy to finish what he'd started. Viloria, 19-0 (12) with 1 no-contest, outworked the challenger, using his jab and firing off enough quick (but not overly effective) combinations to do the job. A hard right hand in the 10th was the younger man's best punch, drawing blood from the nose of Aguirre. By the time the 12 rounds were over, Viloria had done enough, winning 116-112 on the cards of C.J. Ross (USA) and Ray Hawkins (USA), and a somewhat wide 117-111 on the scorecard of Glenn Trowbridge (USA).

It was by no means an impressive performance from Viloria, but it was an excellent learning experience for him—and an important reminder that he can't expect to blow everyone out in the first three minutes.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(2-18-06)

Ivan Calderon W 12 Isaac Bustos

Las Vegas, Nevada: Bustos' brief alphabet title reign from '04 to '05 appeared fluky at the time—he won a title when Eagle Kyowa injured his shoulder and couldn't continue—and his meeting with Calderon on the Margarito-Gomez undercard did nothing to dispel that notion. The Mexican, who'd celebrated his 31st birthday two days earlier, was completely outclassed and virtually shut out by the tiny Puerto Rican, who has long since proven that fringe-contending strawweights don't have a prayer against his masterful skills. This was a classic Calderon performance: fairly dull and completely one-sided. The scores told the story: Clark Sammartino (USA) and Doug Tucker (USA) saw it 120-108, while Bill Graham (USA) took mercy on Bustos and scored it 119-109.

The five-foot-tall Calderon, 104, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico,

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Bustos had no answer for Calderon's speed and skill

gave up four inches, but had absolutely no problem outboxing his taller foe, even from distance. The southpaw Calderon's counter right hooks were on point, and Bustos, 105, Mexico City, could do nothing but stalk and miss, round after round.

It was lucky for Bustos, 24-8-3 (13), that Calderon packs virtually no power, though he did manage to wobble the Mexican briefly in round seven. The same pattern just kept repeating itself down the stretch: Bustos gives chase, Calderon jabs, moves, and counters flawlessly. It was an easy night for the judges, and for referee Robert Byrd (USA).

And it won't get any tougher for the 31-year-old Calderon, 25-0 (5), in his next fight, as he was scheduled for a late-April bout with anonymous Miguel Tellez as this magazine went to press.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(2-18-06)

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12
Gilberto Keb Baas

Chainart, Thailand: Thirteen isn't always an unlucky number. Thailander Pongsaklek demonstrated this when he successfully defended the WBC flyweight title for the 13th time, coasting to a lopsided unanimous decision over Mexican Keb Baas in Saanburi Outdoor Stadium. With the victory, Pongsaklek inched closer to Miguel Canto's record of 14 straight flyweight title defenses.

Keb Baas was the perfect opponent for Pongsaklek: battle-tested and conveniently ranked 10th by the WBC. The Mexican fighter inexplicably climbed from 15th to 10th in the WBC rankings after losing two fights in a row and then defeating four inexperienced fighters with a combined record far below .500. Pongsaklek's reluctance to face the division's best has become the ugly mole on the face of Thailand's boxing scene—seen and noted, but rarely spoken about.

Round one started slowly, with both fighters cautiously probing for openings. It was clear from the start that Pongsaklek, 28, had the better defense. Unable to find the head of the titleholder, Keb Baas, 28, initiated a body attack, remaining determined, periodically scoring with the left hook.

The southpaw beltholder controlled the middle rounds with his jab, peppering the face of Keb Baas and keeping the Mexican off-balance with intermittent hooks and uppercuts. The pace slowed until Pongsaklek landed a series of sharp right hooks in round seven, awakening the unusually quiet Thai crowd.

By round 10, the blistering Thai heat had reduced the fight to short, sporadic flurries with long lulls in the action. Pong-

PHOTO BY SCOTT MALLON

Wonjongkam comes off the ropes with a right uppercut

saklek set his cruise control, content to lie on the ropes and use his defense as his offense. Keb Baas, 26-13-1 (15), made a last, feeble attempt at winning the final round, but it was much too little, much too late. Although never hurt nor in danger, Pongsaklek looked weary and frustrated by the final bell.

Judges Stephen Blea (USA) and Jae Bong Kim (Korea) both scored the bout 120-108, while Yuji Fukuchi (Japan) had it 119-110. THE RING scored the bout 119-109.

Despite winning virtually every round on the scorecards, the Thailander was far from dominating, looking sluggish and ordinary against the awkward Mexican.

"He was a tough, difficult opponent and very strong," said Pongsaklek, 60-2 (31). "He had a good body attack and I didn't want to get butted while on the inside. I'm very happy to get the win."

Promoter: **Virat Vajiratanawongse**
(2-16-06)
Scott Mallon

Peter Manfredo KO 3 Scott Pemberton

Providence, Rhode Island: The snowstorm that blanketed the Northeast forced a one-day postponement of the "Contender: East Coast Pride" card at the Dunkin Donuts Center. But another blizzard occurred the next night, this time in the ring, as *The Contender* star Manfredo overwhelmed veteran Pemberton in by far the biggest win of his career.

The sellout crowd of more than 9,000 braved the elements to watch local hero Manfredo, 26, 167¾, Providence, Rhode Island, who has acquired a tremendous following since last year's reality-TV series. On this night, it was a picture-perfect script for the boxer and his supporters, as it took him just one more round to take out Pemberton, 39, 168, New Bedford, Massachusetts, than it did Jeff Lacy last year.

This was Manfredo's second bout with trainer Freddie Roach in his corner, and the relationship is paying obvious dividends. Manfredo moved around the ring with a fluidity previously missing during the reality show bouts, where he would cover up peek-a-boo style all too often, giving away rounds. There would be none of that on this night. He picked apart Pemberton in the first stanza with jabs and one-twos, rarely standing right in front of his foe. On the rare occasions when Pemberton landed his right, the Rhode Islander took the punches well.

By the second round, the difference in hand speed was quite evident. Manfredo was first and his punches were sharper and more accurate. Pemberton appeared sluggish and confused, an unusual condition considering how often the two had sparred each other in the past. When the taller man was able to get off, Manfredo skillfully eluded the blows, all the while staying balanced.

The roof fell in on "The Sandman" in the third. Manfredo wobbled Pemberton with a left hook in mid-ring early in the round, sending him back to the ropes in a neutral corner, as the crowd, Gatti-esque with electricity, roared with deafening volume. A classic right uppercut, which Pemberton later said he "didn't even see," dropped the Massachusetts man to his knees.

Pemberton beat the count, but appeared unstable as Manfredo pounced on him again. After some vicious bodyshots, a Manfredo right to the top of the head sent a disoriented Pemberton backpedaling to the red corner, where he fell back into the turnbuckle for the second knockdown. Pemberton rose in time and referee Dick Flaherty (USA) could have stopped matters right there, as the pugilist's brain appeared more scrambled than on his

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Manfredo attacks Pemberton in New England showdown

first visit to the canvas, but the official allowed it to continue. Manfredo trapped him again, pounding Pemberton to the head and body before Flaherty mercifully stepped in to halt the carnage at the 2:06 mark.

Manfredo, 25-3 (11), was typically humble at the postfight press conference, praising Roach, Pemberton, and the 10-round scheduled distance. "I was much more relaxed knowing I had 10 rounds to work with; those five-round *Contender* fights felt like amateur fights in that you feel pressured to start quickly. I felt strong at 168 and wanted to take Scott out early."

Pemberton, 29-5-1 (24), wisely hinted at retirement afterward. "I guess I got old overnight," he said. "But I've had a good career no matter what happens. I'm happy for Peter. He has a lot of fans now. My mail lady even keeps asking me to get her Peter's autograph."

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoters: **C.E.S., Tournament of Contenders**
(2-13-06)
Mike Greenhill

Joey Gilbert KO 3 Jimmy Lange

Fairfax, Virginia: This was a rematch of a bout on the *Contender* series, which Gilbert won via five-round decision. But the second time held much less drama, as Gilbert pummeled Lange into submission inside of three stanzas in the vanquished's own backyard to win a regional middleweight title.

Lange, 30, 159, Great Falls, Virginia, had the enthusiastic hometown crowd of 6,207 squarely behind him at George Mason University's Patriot Center, but Gilbert had a couple of weapons to counteract those supporters—a solid right hand and Dan Birmingham in his corner. Lange came out jabbing and moving in the first, while Gilbert, 29, 159, Reno, Nevada, tried to walk him down. Gilbert's jab proved much harder than his opponent's, snapping Lange's head back on two different occasions. Late in the round, the Nevadan's hard right to the top of the head sent Lange to the canvas on his knees. He beat the count rather easily, but still looked in trouble. Gilbert moved in with a flurry in an attempt to finish the job, but ran out of time as the bell sounded.

After that inauspicious debut, Lange made sure to keep his distance in the second, jabbing well and sliding off the ropes when necessary. Gilbert connected less often, but the difference in power between the two combatants was evident, as two more Gilbert jabs rocked Lange during the round. Lange couldn't stay out of range in round three, and it cost him dearly. Gilbert rocked him with a hard combo to the head, sending Lange into a neutral corner. Gilbert then nailed Lange with a flurry of about 15 accurate and unanswered punches to the head and body before referee Chris Wollesen (USA) appropriately stepped in at 2:52 of the third, hushing the largely pro-Lange crowd.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Gilbert (right) dominated Lange for a third-round kayo

"I have no excuses; he was the better man tonight," said Lange, 26-3-1 (18). "He's much better than he was the first time we fought; he's much stronger and really sitting down on his punches."

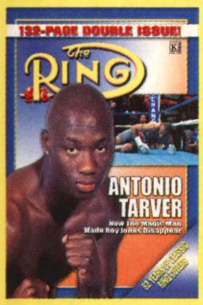
Gilbert, 11-1 (8), was effusive at the postfight conference. "No disrespect to Jimmy, but to be honest, I've had tougher days in the St. Pete gym," he said. "I've been sparring with Winky Wright, Jeff Lacy, and Chad Dawson, a couple of other guys, and with Dan training me, this fight was won three weeks ago after all the hard work."

Said Lange's father and trainer, John Lange, "Dan did a great job with Joey. If we ever fight him again, we'll have to bring a baseball bat or shoot him."

Television: **CSI Sports**
Promoter: **Keystone Boxing**
(2-18-06)
Mike Greenhill ■

The RING SQUARED

Limited quantities of *The Ring's* popular 132-page double issues are available by mail order. Act now before they're gone!

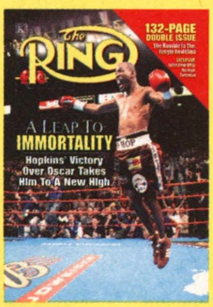


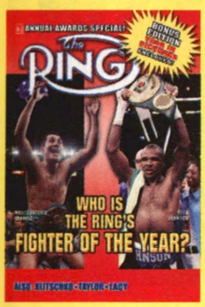
Vol. I, 2004:

Cover Story: Antonio Tarver: How The Magic Man Made Roy Jones Disappear.
Special Section: The Ring's Classic Covers—A Decade-By-Decade Look At Boxing History
Also Inside: Pacquiao-Marquez, Floyd Mayweather, Freitas-Corrales preview, Leon Spinks, Kelvin & Kelly Davis, Termite Watkins.

Vol. II, 2004:

Cover Story: A Leap To Immortality: Hopkins' Victory Over Oscar Takes Him To A New High.
Magazine Within A Magazine: 30 Years Later: The Rumble In The Jungle Revisited.
Also Inside: Andre Ward, Erik Morales, Fernando Vargas, Shane Mosley, Pete Ranzany.



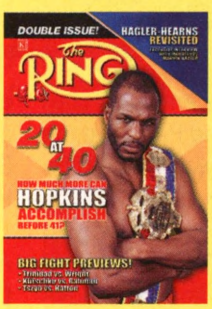


Vol. III, 2005:

Cover Story: Glen Johnson—Fighter of the Year.
Special Bonus Issue: The Year In Pictures.
Also Inside: Year-end awards, Vitali Klitschko, Jermain Taylor & Jeff Lacy.

Vol. IV, 2005:

Cover Story: 20 At 40: How Much More Can Hopkins Accomplish Before 41?
Magazine Within A Magazine: 20 Years Later: Hagler vs. Hearns Revisited.
Also Inside: Trinidad-Wright preview, Hasim Rahman, Tszyu-Hatton preview, Larios-McCullough, Max Schmeling.

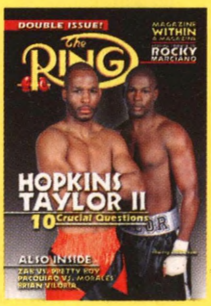


Vol. V, 2005:

Cover Story: "Pretty Boy" Floyd: Just As Great As He Says He Is … Maybe Even Better.
Special Bonus Section: The Pound-For-Pound Elite.
Also Inside: Tarver-Jones II, Mike Tyson, quitters.

Vol. VI, 2005:

Cover Story: Hopkins vs. Taylor II: 10 Crucial Questions Surrounding The Middleweight Championship.
Magazine Within A Magazine: Tribute To Rocky Marciano.
Also Inside: Raheem-Morales, Judah & Mayweather, Brian Viloria, Box Like The Pros book excerpt.



Please send me **THE RING DOUBLES** I have checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order for $7.95, payable to London Publishing Co., for each issue I am ordering (shipping and handling included).

- ☐ **Tarver/Ring Cover History** (Vol. 1, 2004)
- ☐ **Hopkins/Ali vs. Foreman** (Vol. II, 2004)
- ☐ **Johnson/Year in Pictures** (Vol. III, 2005)
- ☐ **Hopkins/Hagler vs. Hearns** (Vol. IV, 2005)
- ☐ **Mayweather/P4P Elite** (Vol. V, 2005)
- ☐ **Hopkins-Taylor/Marciano** (Vol. VI, 2005)

SEND TO:
London Publishing Co.
Box 910
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Please indicate method of payment:
☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to London Publishing Co.)
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
Card #_____
Expiration Date: ___/___
MO/YR

Signature: _____

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____APT.____

CITY_____STATE____ZIP_____

PRICES APPLY IN THE U.S. ONLY. ALL OTHER COUNTRIES PLEASE ADD $1.50 PER MAGAZINE FOR SURFACE MAIL AND $3 FOR EVERY ISSUE SENT AIRMAIL.. INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. PLEASE ALLOW 6-8 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY.

7125

From THE RING, September 1995

BONAFIDE SUPERSTAR
Oscar Is The Boxer Of The '90s

By Bernard Fernandez

Great promoters, by definition, are men of vision. They are able to take the long view and predict what people want before they know they want it.

And so it is for pugilistic prophet Bob Arum, who can see a day, probably years down the road, when boxing fans will want nothing so much as a matchup of Oscar De La Hoya, by then filled out to a robust 160 pounds and well on his way to his stated goal of six world championships in six weight classifications, and Dana Rosenblatt. De La Hoya, the only American gold medalist in boxing at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, presumably will have expanded his already considerable appeal among Hispanic and Anglo fans, and Rosenblatt will have proven himself a worthy successor to such great Jewish fighters as Benny Leonard and Barney Ross. Pay-per-view subscriptions in record numbers, to Arum's way of thinking, almost certainly will be ordered for a superfight in which so many ethnic bases are touched.

Shortly after De La Hoya solidified his claim to being the world's best lightweight with a two-round blowout of IBF tiltlist Rafael Ruelas at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, and Rosenblatt retained that little bauble known as the WBC Continental-Americas middleweight belt with an emphatic one-punch knockout of Chad Parker on the undercard, Arum allowed himself the luxury of thinking out loud.

"The dream fight for the biggest money of all-time is Oscar and Rosenblatt," Arum said with the enthusiasm of P.T. Barnum announcing the first American tour under his promotional banner by Tom Thumb or Jumbo the Elephant. "That's what I think about when I go to sleep at night."

Not everyone's dreams are made of this, of course. But only a visionary like Arum is capable of taking a leap of faith large enough to project Rosenblatt, a southpaw with commendable skills, as a latter-day melding of Benny Leonard and Marvelous Marvin Hagler.

No one, however, can say that Arum is a recent jumper onto the De La Hoya bandwagon. Nearly everyone predicted great things for "The Golden Boy" since—and in many cases, before—he became the Olympic 132-pound champion by decisioning Germany's Marco Rudolph. And no one was heaping out praise in larger doses than Arum, who figured De La Hoya's fluency in English and Spanish, matinee-idol good looks, appealing

personality, and, oh, yes, vast array of ring abilities made for a box office attraction of unfathomable dimensions.

"He's got it all going for him right now," Arum said early in De La Hoya's professional career. "The Olympic thing, the punch, the looks: The package is good. He looks special, don't you think? I think he's going to be bigger than Sugar Ray Leonard or Marvin Hagler ... he'll be the biggest in boxing history, except for Ali."

Oscar the (Money) Pouch has been the basis of many comparisons, not all of them as glowing as those outlined by Arum. Several actual or would-be managers have told tales of an ungrateful and callous lout, a Judas in padded gloves whose loyalty can be bought by whomever brings the largest suitcase filled with high-denomination currency. Still others point to flash-knockdowns suffered against the undistinguished likes of Narciso Valenzuela and Giorgio Campanella and recall the wasted potential of Paul Gonzales, the 1984 Olympic champion who, like De La Hoya, was a product of the East L.A. barrio. Gonzales' pro career never came close to living up to the impossibly high expectations set by others. Talent is one thing, but it takes an especially strong individual, a Muhammad Ali or a Michael Jordan, to flourish under the hot glare of a spotlight that never shuts off.

Recalling their sparring sessions before De La Hoya went to Barcelona, Ruelas figured his mental toughness, hewn by an up-by-the-bootstraps approach to life and boxing, would prove the difference once the punches started flying for real.

"I learned he's not very strong up here," said Ruelas, tapping his heart. "I learned that he doesn't like pressure, which is what he's going to get. He's always gotten it from me, and he'll get it again. Things came a lot easier for him. Maybe they came too quickly, too sudden.

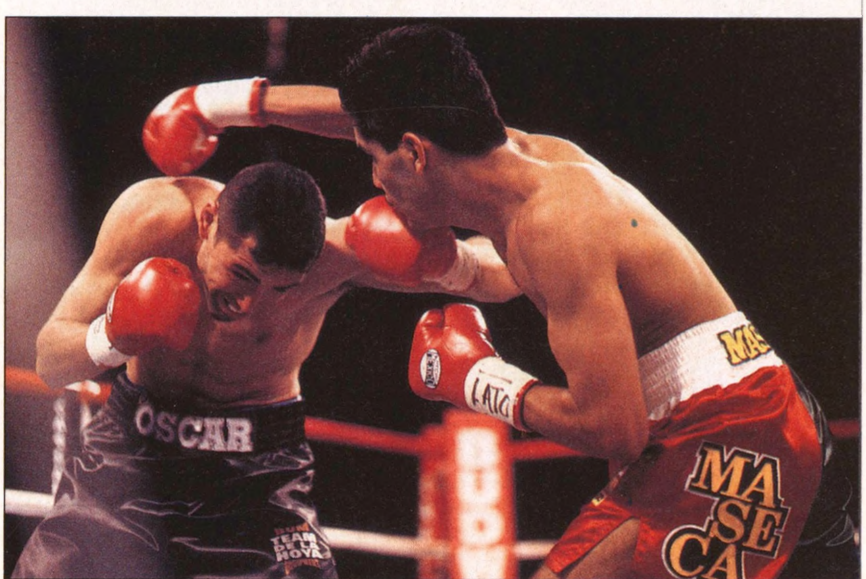
"People also say Oscar's chin is unquestionable. His chin is questionable. It's already been shown his chin is not the greatest. When he went down from those guys who can't punch, it removed the question."

De La Hoya took apart defending IBF lightweight titlist and Los Angeles rival Rafael Ruelas in less than five minutes. If anyone had doubts about "The Golden Boy" prior to the fight, the victory answered them—and elevated De La Hoya to legitimate superstar status.

Ruelas is normally the most gracious of fighters, as incapable of snarling insults as he is of carrying on a conversation in, say, Mandarin Chinese. But there has always been something about Oscar that has raised his hackles. It might have been something to do with irritation at the red carpet that has been put down since the beginning for De La Hoya, who was paid $75,000 for his first pro bout. That's a rate slightly in excess of the $400 Ruelas, then 17, received for his pro debut in 1989.

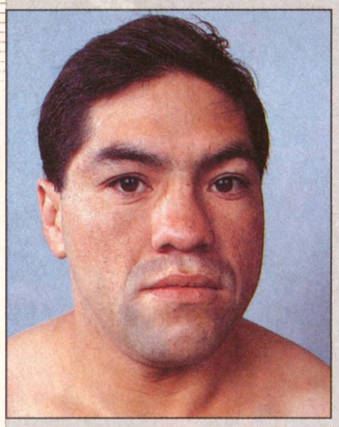
Class envy, like racial, ethnic, national, and geographical differences, is the backdrop for the most widely anticipated fights. Fans, and often the fighters themselves, are compelled to draw a line that neatly separates protagonists. Boxing's tension is derived from the anticipation of one man crossing that line and operating successfully in his opponent's zone.

On the surface, the pairing of De La



In round one, Ruelas came out aggressively throwing wide, telegraphed punches that left him off-balance and open to De La Hoya counters. Though Ruelas was the fighter applying the pressure, it was De La Hoya's lateral movement that enabled him to control the exchanges.

THE RING RATINGS, September 1995



Chiquita Gonzalez

Heavyweights
1. Oliver McCall, Chicago, IL
2. Riddick Bowe, Fort Washington, MD
3. George Foreman, Houston, TX
4. Michael Moorer, Detroit, MI
5. Lennox Lewis, England
6. Bruce Seldon, Atlantic City, NJ
7. Henry Akinwande, England
8. Jorge Luis Gonzalez, Las Vegas, NV
9. Alexander Zolkin, Westerville, OH
10. Tim Witherspoon, Philadelphia, PA

Cruiserweights
1. Orlin Norris, Campo, CA
2. Al Cole, Spring Valley, NY
3. Adolpho Washington, Lexington, KY
4. Anaclet Wamba, France
5. Sergei Kobozev, Brooklyn, NY
6. Carl Thompson, England
7. Arthur Williams, Las Vegas, NV
8. Torsten May, Germany
9. Patrice Aoussi, France
10. Nate Miller, Philadelphia, PA

Light Heavyweights
1. Mike McCallum, Brooklyn, NY
2. Virgil Hill, Bismarck, ND
3. Henry Maske, Germany
4. Montell Griffin, Chicago, IL
5. James Toney, Ann Arbor, MI
6. Fabrice Tiozzo, France
7. Dariusz Michalczewski, Germany
8. Merqui Sosa, New York, NY
9. Prince Charles Williams, Mansfield, OH
10. Graciano Rocchigiani, Germany

Super Middleweights
1. Roy Jones, Pensacola, FL
2. Nigel Benn, England
3. Steve Collins, Ireland
4. Frank Liles, Hollywood, CA
5. Chris Eubank, England
6. Vinny Pazienza, Cranston, RI
7. Tim Littles, Flint, MI
8. Frederic Seillier, France
9. Tony Thornton, Glassboro, NJ
10. Bryant Brannon, Trenton, NJ

Middleweights
1. Jorge Castro, Argentina
2. Bernard Hopkins, Philadelphia, PA
3. Quincy Taylor, Dallas, TX
4. John David Jackson, Seattle, WA
5. Julian Jackson, Virgin Islands
6. Reggie Johnson, Houston, TX
7. Joe Lipsey, Lansing, MI
8. Dana Rosenblatt, Malden, MA
9. Rodney Toney, Campo, CA
10. Richie Woodhall, England

Junior Middleweights
1. Vincent Pettway, Baltimore, MD
2. Julio Cesar Vasquez, Argentina
3. Buddy McGirt, Hauppauge, NY
4. Gianfranco Rosi, Italy
5. Verno Phillips, New York, NY
6. Yory Boy Campas, Mexico
7. Terry Norris, Mission Valley, CA
8. Julio Cesar Green, Brooklyn, NY
9. Raul Marquez, Houston, TX
10. Laurent Boudouani, France

Welterweights
1. Pernell Whitaker, Norfolk, VA
2. Felix Trinidad, Puerto Rico
3. Ike Quartey, Ghana
4. Crisanto Espana, Northern Ireland
5. Derrell Coley, Capitol Heights, MA
6. Wilfredo Rivera, Puerto Rico
7. Oba Carr, Detroit, MI
8. Eauonn Loughran, Ireland
9. Andrew Murray, Guyana
10. Valery Kayumba, France

Junior Welterweights
1. Frankie Randall, Warren, OH
2. Kostya Tszyu, Australia
3. Julio Cesar Chavez, Mexico
4. Juan Coggi, Argentina
5. David Kamau, Los Angeles, CA
6. Jake Rodriguez, Brentwood, NY
7. Fred Pendleton, Miami, FL
8. Jan Bergman, South Africa
9. Khalid Rahilou, France
10. Ray Oliveira, Falls River, MA

Lightweights
1. Oscar De La Hoya, Whittier, CA
2. Miguel Angel Gonzalez, Mexico
3. Orzubek Nazarov, Japan
4. Rafael Ruelas, Arleta, CA
5. Steve Johnston, Denver, CO
6. Miguel Julio, Colombia
7. John-John Molina, Puerto Rico
8. Leavander Johnson, Atlantic City, NJ
9. Shane Mosley, Pomona, CA
10. Ivan Robinson, Delran, NJ

Junior Lightweights
1. Gabe Ruelas, Arleta, CA
2. Genaro Hernandez, Los Angeles, CA
3. Jesse James Leija, San Antonio, TX
4. Azumah Nelson, Ghana
5. Reggie Tuur, Whitestone, NJ
6. Ed Hopson, St. Louis, MO
7. Arturo Gatti, Jersey City, NJ
8. Victor Hugo Paz, Argentina
9. Freddie Liberatore, Bayside, NY
10. Robert Garcia, Oxnard, CA

Featherweights
1. Alejandro Gonzalez, Mexico
2. Tom Johnson, Detroit, MI
3. Steve Robson, Wales
4. Eloy Rojas, Venezuela
5. Kevin Kelley, Flushing, NY
6. Yung Kyun Park, South Korea
7. Tracy Patterson, Highland, NY
8. Ever Beleno, Colombia
9. Miguel Arrozal, Portland, OR
10. Manuel Medina, Mexico

Junior Featherweights
1. Vuyani Bungu, South Africa
2. Hector Acero-Sanchez, New York, NY
3. Antonio Cermeno, Venezuela
4. Naseem Hamed, England
5. Wilfredo Vasquez, Puerto Rico
6. Orlando Canizales, Laredo, TX
7. Marco Antonio Barrera, Mexico
8. Welcome Ncita, South Africa
9. Kennedy McKinney, Las Vegas, NV
10. Eddie Croft, San Mateo, CA

Bantamweights
1. Yasuei Yakushiji, Japan
2. Daorung MP Petroleum, Thailand
3. Wayne McCullough, Las Vegas, NV
4. Sergio Reyes, Fort Worth, TX
5. Mbulelo Botile, South Africa
6. Eliecer Julio, Colombia
7. Al Kotey, England
8. Nana Konadu, Ghana
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi, Japan
10. Khaoyai Mahasarakam, Thailand

Junior Bantamweights
1. Harold Grey, Colombia
2. Hiroshi Kawashima, Japan
3. Johnny Tapia, Albuquerque, NM
4. Hyung Chul Lee, South Korea

5. Julio Borboa, Mexico
6. Cecilio Espino, Huntington Park, CA
7. David Griman, Venezuela
8. Satoshi Iida, Japan
9. Gerry Penalosa, Philippines
10. Seung Koo Lee, South Korea

Flyweights

1. Yuri Arbachakov, Japan
2. Danny Romero, Albuquerque, NM
3. San Sor Ploenchit, Thailand
4. Mark Johnson, Washington, D.C.
5. Alberto Jimenez, Mexico
6. Isaias Zamudio, Blythe, CA
7. Hiroki Ioka, Japan
8. Robbie Regan, Wales
9. Chatchai Elite-Gym, Thailand
10. Francis Tejedor, Colombia

Junior Flyweights

1. Chiquita Gonzalez, Mexico
2. Michael Carbajal, Phoenix, AZ
3. Hi Yong Choi, South Korea
4. Melchor Cob Castro, Mexico
5. Carlos Murillo, Panama
6. Jesus Chong, Mexico
7. Leo Gamez, Venezuela
8. Yuichi Hosono, Japan
9. Eric Griffin, Jasper, TN
10. Hadao CP Gym, Thailand

Pound For Pound

1. Pernell Whitaker, Welterweight
2. Roy Jones, Super Middleweight
3. Ricardo Lopez, Strawweight
4. Chiquita Gonzalez, Junior Flyweight
5. Oscar De La Hoya, Lightweight
6. Felix Trinidad, Welterweight
7. Frankie Randall, Junior Welterweight
8. Yuri Arbachakov, Flyweight
9. Kostya Tszyu, Junior Welterweight
10. Mike McCallum, Light Heavyweight

Hoya and Ruelas appeared to lack any such conflict. De La Hoya, 22, is an American citizen of Mexican descent; Ruelas, 24, is a green card-carrying Mexican national who has lived in the USA since age seven. With Las Vegas hotels jammed with Mexican and Mexican-American tourists who made the fight the focal point of a weekend *Cinco de Mayo* celebration, a most unlikely point of contention arose.

Golf.

De La Hoya acknowledged sneaking off from training to a nine-hole course at his training camp in Big Bear for the occasional round. It is his newest passion, a means of escaping the pressures of the gym.

"I think all boxers should get into golf," De La Hoya said. "Boxers have great hand-eye coordination. It's there. The timing, everything, is there."

To Ruelas, golf is not so much a leisure activity as it is a preserve for rich Anglos. Ruelas is not a golfer, nor does he expect to become one, and he cited De La Hoya's fondness for putters and pitching wedges as proof that The Golden Boy somehow had drifted away from his roots.

"After this fight, Oscar might want to take a rest and consider a career in golf," Ruelas said. "His heart obviously is not in boxing. It's just something he does for the money. He'd rather be out hitting golf balls."

None of the prefight comments from either man surprised Arum, who said the golf thing was merely a stitch in a wider social fabric.

"The same sort of things were pointed out when Sugar Ray Leonard fought Thomas Hearns the first time, in 1981," he noted. "Leonard was the Olympic gold medalist with the national television contract. He was the media darling. Tommy was the kid who came up the hard way. Of course there was friction between them.

"None of this is manufactured, but I wouldn't categorize it as dislike. These guys have known each other since they were kids. The first time they sparred, they were, like, 11 and 13 years old. There's always been a rivalry between them, but I would say it's a rivalry in the best sense. Each one just wants to prove he's the better fighter."

Whatever the reasons, De La Hoya-Ruelas attracted almost unprecedented pay-per-view interest among Hispanic fans, contributing to an overall buy rate that exceeded even that for Roy Jones-James Toney. De La Hoya, who cracked the traditional seven-figure barrier for superstars when he took home $1.25-million for his previous outing, a 12-round unanimous decision over former IBF junior lightweight titlist John-John Molina, continued to soar toward megabucks territory with a $1.75-million payday, while Ruelas became the newest member of boxing's millionaires club by pocketing $1-million.

"If he hadn't won the gold medal," Ruelas said, "there's no story."

Ruelas' thought his strategy of carrying a high guard would subdue De La Hoya's attack. But Ruelas couldn't maintain the defense very long, and once he dropped his hands, The Golden Boy was there to strike with combinations and explosive powerpunches.

Ruelas and De La Hoya entered the fight with questionable chins. It was De La Hoya's punches, however, that carried the bigger impact, producing two knockdowns. "He caught me before I caught him," Ruelas said afterward.

Perhaps he was merely trying to hype interest in the bout, or maybe he was just giving his honest opinion, but De La Hoya fired the first shot in the war of words immediately after he got past Molina. Of Ruelas, against whom he was already contracted to face, De La Hoya said matter-of-factly, "With that bad balance, when I catch him with some good shots, he'll fall over."

Ruelas seemed to be taken aback by De La Hoya's put-downs, reacting at first with quiet dismay, and later with an increasingly strident air of indignation.

"If he's trying to get to me, it won't happen," Ruelas said several weeks before the fight. "I don't know his reason for doing it, but Oscar's been talking a lot of trash. If he wants to elevate himself in his own mind by putting me down, that's his way of doing it. I'll give my answer in the ring."

A few days before fight night, however, Ruelas angrily denounced De La Hoya's assertion that he would "take Ruelas' heart."

"How's he going to take my heart?" Ruelas said. "If he really believes that, he is fooling himself." Of their 1992 pre-Olympic sparring sessions, Ruelas added, "He asked to spar, but after two days he didn't want to come back to the gym. It was too tough for him."

Ruelas' excitable trainer, Joe Goossen, was even more unforgiving in his recollections. "Oscar left because he got his ass whipped," said Goossen, who allowed that Ruelas would be "all over Oscar like a soup sandwich. Molina had the right idea. He just didn't have the skills or the size to get the job done. Rafael does."

The prefight heat was turned up a few notches when, at the final press conference, De La Hoya and Ruelas were seated on opposite sides of a long dais. On De La Hoya's side of the stage was a large Mexican flag; on Ruelas' side was a large American flag. The placing of the flags was coincidental, but intentions were unmistakable when it was Ruelas' turn to speak. He switched the flags before stepping to the podium, as if to say he is more Mexican than De La Hoya.

Give Ruelas credit for winning the battle for the hearts and minds of the majority of the 10,118 spectators in Caesars Palace's outdoor stadium. Ruelas, who went off as a 5-2 underdog, was cheered much more loudly upon entering the ring than was De La Hoya, the golfing insider.

But words and images meant nothing once the bell sounded, and it was immediately evident that De La Hoya's observations about Ruelas' balance was as on-target as his punches would prove to be. Rushing from his corner, Ruelas, 135, Sylmar, California, uncorked a wild hook that missed badly and sent him lurching off to the side. De La Hoya, 134½, East Los Angeles, California, moved laterally and won the round by scoring with a couple of hooks to the body and some right hands.

Ruelas' sense of balance became further impaired when, a minute or so into the second round, he attempted to throw a right and was countered by a well-timed hook to the jaw. The IBF titleholder crashed to the canvas, and although he beat the count of referee Richard Steele (USA), he arose on wobbly legs.

De La Hoya wasn't about to let the opportunity pass. He quickly put Ruelas down again, this time with a short right, and he was landing freely with both hands along the ropes when Steele leaped in and signaled a halt to the bout at the 1:43 mark.

"He knew I'd be coming after him," Ruelas said. "I tried to get things started a little faster than I normally do, and he just caught me with a clean shot.

Talk was immediately broached of a fight between De La Hoya and Gabriel Ruelas, Rafael's older brother who beat Jimmy Garcia in their ill-fated clash on the undercard.

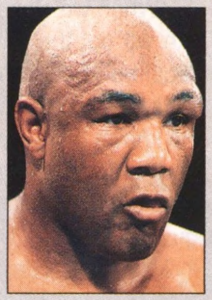
THE RING, September 1995

The Cover: Oscar De La Hoya won his first belt in a two-round blowout of Rafael Ruelas, claiming the IBF lightweight title. With half the decade gone, great things were predicted for "The Golden Boy," some even going as far to say De La Hoya would be the fighter of the 1990s. By the end of the decade, De La Hoya was the biggest attraction in the sport, hauling in record pay-per-view numbers for a non-heavyweight.

Ryan Pays Tribute: Columnist Jeff Ryan sometimes throws compliments around like manhole covers, but Ryan couldn't hold back from calling Howard Cosell the greatest fight announcer who ever lived, upon Cosell's death of a heart embolism, on April 23, 1995. Ryan stated Cosell was the best because he was both a journalist and an entertainer. "The Mouth" was also the last TV announcer to call major fights alone.

Romero Makes History: Danny Romero became the first American flyweight titlist since Philadelphia's Midget Wolgast was flyweight champion in 1935. Romero beat Colombian Francisco Tejedor by unanimous decision, scoring a knockdown in the 12th as an exclamation point.

Get Out Now, George: In an open letter to George Foreman, THE RING suggested "Big George" back away from the boxing buffet and think about retiring once and for all. Foreman was coming off a controversial majority-decision victory over Axel Schulz that allowed Foreman, looking beat up and ancient, to barely retain the IBF title.



Fighter Of The Month: This issue of THE RING seemed to be a De La Hoya special. After dispensing Rafael Ruelas in just two rounds, The Golden Boy earned the honors.

He caught me before I caught him."

Alternately pompous and penitent, De La Hoya strives to appear humble even as his arrogance bubbles to the surface. Asked if his quickie demolition of Ruelas had put him on a par with WBC welterweight champion Pernell Whitaker, who is widely perceived as boxing's best pound-for-pound practitioner, De La Hoya said, "Oh, no. Too tough for me. I've only had 18 fights. I'm still a little chihuahua in with all these pit bulls." Moments later, the cautious Oscar gave way to the defiant Oscar, who allowed that "in my heart, I am the best fighter."

Next up for De La Hoya might be former WBC super featherweight champion Jesse James Leija, presumably before a large turnout in Leija's hometown of San Antonio. Or The Golden Boy might opt for Gabriel Ruelas, Rafael's older brother and Leija's conqueror, who scored an 11th-round TKO of Jimmy Garcia on the De La Hoya-Ruelas undercard. In either case, the bucks and the rave reviews figure to keep on pouring in.

The Rafael Ruelas blowout truly launched De La Hoya, who debuted in THE RING's pound-for-pound list. It didn't take Top Rank promoter Bob Arum long to begin imaging the possibilities for De La Hoya, who Arum predicted would be the biggest thing in boxing except for Muhammad Ali.

"I never thought that much about Oscar before tonight," Gabe said. "But now I have to recognize him as a great fighter."

Arum, meanwhile, is left to wonder whether boxing's answer to Jumbo will continue to swell to elephantine proportions.

"He's going to be huge, the biggest thing in boxing," Arum said of De La Hoya. "I'm not saying he is or will be a better fighter than Roy Jones or Pernell Whitaker, but he'll be bigger at the box office. There's an element of charisma that comes into play. Sugar Ray Leonard had it. This kid has it too.

"Leonard provided us with the map we're going to follow. The map traces a route from a big fight to a bigger fight to an even bigger fight after that."

Only time will tell if the route goes past the Ruelas brothers and Rosenblatt and maybe Julio Cesar Chavez, and all the way to that place where Ali and a precious few others reside. All of us can't see the entire map. But the trajectory being followed does seem to be heading up. *Way* up. ■

 (Continued from page 30)

earn substantial money held considerable appeal. A new mandate was born inside Pascal—to be known as the greatest fighter ever produced by Canada.

Once the decision was made, Pascal made a compilation tape of his most impressive amateur fights and put it directly into the hands of Yvon Michel, whose company, Groupe Yvon Michel (GYM), is Canada's foremost boxing promotional outfit. Several years ago, Michel had been instrumental in bringing Montreal-based fighters Eric Lucas and Leonard Dorin to titles as acting general manager of Interbox. But when Interbox went into bankruptcy protection in '04, Michel ventured out on his own, signing talent and striking deals with casinos in Quebec to promote cards on a regular basis that would be broadcast live on Saturday afternoons via cable by Quebec broadcaster TVA. Michel had followed Pascal in the amateurs, but lost track of the fighter's development while working with Interbox. The tape stimulated immediate action. Michel quickly signed the charismatic fighter, recognizing GYM's frequent shows would be a perfect fast track for developing Pascal's talent and harnessing his star power.

"When we signed him, we said, 'It's like we got the winning lottery ticket.'" recalled Michel. "As a promoter you always want to have boxers like Jean. He knows that a boxer is not only what you do in the ring, he's his own best promoter. And that helps us a lot. This guy will one day fill up the Bell Center in Montreal because of his charisma. Jean understands it's the best to sell yourself and answer all questions."

Pascal has so far succeeded on both counts, having entered the ring accompanied by comely ladies and flexing various muscles on his rippling physique for the cameras after scoring decisive knockouts. Some have criticized his unabashed propensity for self-promotion, but Pascal has remained indifferent.

"When you are good, people criticize you," he said. "Those people are still going to come and see me—maybe to see me get knocked out—but they are still going to come and pay the price for the ticket."

Ironically, Pascal was regarded as a shy young boy who did well in school and otherwise demonstrated a passion for soccer and ice hockey after moving to Montreal from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, at the age of four with his mother, older brother, and younger sister. A gifted athlete from an early age, Pascal was playing hockey at the Junior Double-B level when he was 13, but discovered he was considered too small to evolve in the sport. It was around that time that he began coat-tailing his brother, Nicholson, a Quebec amateur champion, to the gym. Still, Pascal never considered that he might be fated for boxing until he won his first Canadian amateur championship at age 15.

Even before embarking on a pro career, Pascal developed a two-track strategy for his future that spoke to his inexhaustible determination. In order to fulfill a lifelong dream of becoming a policeman, he enrolled in a Police Sciences program at Ahuntsic College, where he plans to graduate in '07. Normally a three-year degree, a unique extended program offered by the college had attracted him because it was designed for athletes who needed to balance the demands of studying with the rigors of training.

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME.COM

Pascal blasts Martin Desjardins with a wicked right en route to a seventh-round knockout and the vacant Canadian super middleweight title. Pascal needs to step up the level of competition, but his promoter is having difficulty luring top-notch talent into the ring.

"People might laugh, but I like to help people," said Pascal. "A police officer is not just about giving tickets to people; it's more than that. And I like action. If I go into the police force, I'd like to go into SWAT or to be the first black guy to be chief of police in Montreal."

An aggressive boxer-puncher with blistering hand speed, it didn't take long for Pascal to develop a reputation for pleasing crowds and terrorizing opponents, including James Crawford whom Pascal dropped six times to score a third-round TKO.

"We've had fights with fighters that nobody knows, and Jean is the kind of guy that needs to have challenges to show his potential and to motivate himself," said Pascal's trainer, Marc Ramsay. "In the Crawford fight he proved he could follow a plan. It was the first fight that we had time to prepare for someone, and it proved that he could follow my instructions and do exactly what was needed to win. He showed maturity for a guy of 23 years old."

A seventh-round kayo of Martin Desjardins for the Canadian super middleweight title followed last December. But Pascal's reputation would soon prove burdensome, Michel discovered, after furnishing Carl Daniels with six weeks worth of training expenses, only to have the former WBA junior middleweight titleholder bow out of his scheduled match against Pascal in February. Apparently, after acquiring a tape of Pascal several days prior to the match, the Daniels camp claimed that he had not prepared for a fighter of his caliber.

"He is the most natural fighter I have ever worked with, no doubt about that." said Ramsay, who began training Pascal in the amateurs eight years ago. "He's a pure talent, faster than the average and stronger too. People haven't seen it yet, but he has a very good chin. He's spectacular. Everything is there. He just has to work hard."

"Who knows?" added Michel, laughing. "Maybe he'll be the first-ever black chief of Montreal police *after* being a world champion." ■

COLLECTOR'S

EXTRAVAGANZA!

The largest selling issue of KO Magazine each year is the giant year-end issue. Since 1987, when these specials went to an expanded format, including four pages of color, they have been virtual newsstand sellouts. Now, you can order these issues by mail.

- KO Achievement Awards
- Predictions
- Results
- The Wacky, Weird, & Highly Unusual
- "Highly Unofficial Official Awards"

All This And Much, Much More In Each Special Year-End Issue!

ONLY $5 EACH ORDER YOURS TODAY!

Make check or money order payable to:
London Publishing Co.
Box 910
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

KO
The Knockout Boxing Magazine

Please rush me the magazines I have checked. I enclose $5 for each one I am ordering.

- ☐ March 1987
- ☐ March 1988
- ☐ April 1989
- ☐ April 1990
- ☐ March 1991
- ☐ April 1992
- ☐ April 1993
- ☐ April 1994
- ☐ April 1995
- ☐ April 1996
- ☐ April 1998
- ☐ April 1999
- ☐ April 2000

Name _____
Address _____
Apt. _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

Price offer applies to U.S. only. All other countries $7. Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6–8 weeks for delivery.

5911/03-02

BOXING FIGHT POSTERS, PROGRAMS, ART PRINTS, T-SHIRTS, PHOTOS & AUTOGRAPHS

AUTOGRAPHED BOXING GLOVES
(Single Gloves, Guaranteed Authentic)

Roberto Duran or Michael Spinks ...$150.00 ea.
Joe Frazier or Jake LaMotta ...$175.00 ea.
Muhammad Ali ...$600.00
Marvin Hagler or Bernard Hopkins ...$150.00 ea.
Sugar Ray Leonard or Shane Mosley ...$125.00 ea.
Vinny Pazienza or Tommy Morrison ...$100.00 ea.
Mike Tyson ...$250.00
Larry Holmes or Arturo Gatti ...$125.00 ea.
Oscar de la Hoya or Roy Jones ...$195.00 ea.
Carmen Basilio or Vito Antuofermo ...$95.00 ea.
Archie Moore or Lennox Lewis ...$200.00 ea.
George Foreman or Evander Holyfield ...$325.00 ea.
Felix Trinidad or Fernando Vargas ...$175.00
Vinny Paz or Joey Gamache ...$75.00 ea.
Willie Pep or Kid Gavilan ...$175.00
Hector Camacho or Alexis Arguello ...$125.00

FIGHT PROGRAMS

ALI/MATHIS or ALI/LISTON II ...$400.00 ea.
ALI/COOPER II or ALI/LONDON ...$350.00 ea.
ALI/FOREMAN or ALI/BUGNER (Closed Circuits) ...$100.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/INOKI (Closed Circuits) ...$150.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/MILDENBERGER ...$1000.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER II or MARCIANO/CHARLES ...$500.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER III (Closed Circuit) ...$100.00
ALI/HOLMES or ALI/NORTON III ...$125.00 ea.
ALI/NORTON (warehouse find) Now just ...$75.00
ALI/NORTON II or ALI/YOUNG ...$600.00 ea.
ALI/QUARRY II or TYSON/GREEN ...$500.00 ea.
ALI/ROBINSON or BASILIO/DEMARCO ...$450.00 ea.
ALI/SPINKS (VG) or ALI/SPINKS II ...$250.00 ea.
BENN/MCCLELLAN or HAGLER/HAMSHO II ...$50.00 ea.
BOWE/GOLOTA I or II ...$35.00 ea.
CAMACHO/DURAN or CAMACHO/RAMIREZ ...$25.00 ea.
CAMACHO/ROSARIO, plus Tyson ...$50.00
CARBAJAL/GONZALEZ, Delahoya/J. Maywheather ...$50.00
CHAVEZ/CAMACHO or DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD ...$40.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/KAMAU or PAZ/LUCAS ...$10.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/MAYWHEATHER II or SAAD/BRAXTON ...$25.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/TAYLOR or CHAVEZ/RANDALL ...$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA PRO DEBUT or MARCIANO/CHARLES II ...$500.00 ea
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II or DELAHOYA/CARR ...$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/GATTI or DELAHOYA/CHARPENTIER ...$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY or DELAHOYA/TYSON ...$45.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY or DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II ...$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER or HOLYFIELD/MOORER ...$45.00 ea.
DURAN/GONZALEZ '99 or FOREMAN/STEWART ...$45.00 ea.
FOREMAN/QAWI or VARGAS/QUARTEY ...$35.00 ea.
GATTI/ROBINSON II, VARGAS/CAMPAS ...$45.00
HAGLER/HEARNS or HAGLER/ROLDAN ...$66.00 ea.
HAGLER/MUGABI or HAGLER/OBEL ...$45.00 ea.
HAMED/KELLY or HAMED/BARRERA ...$40.00 ea.
HEARNS/BARKLEY I or II ...$35.00 ea.
HEARNS/HILL or HEARNS/ROLDAN ...$25.00 ea.
HOLMES/MERCER or LEONARD/CAMACHO ...$15.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/BOWE I, II or III ...$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/FOREMAN or HOLYFIELD/LEWIS ...$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/HOLMES or CAMACHO/HAUGEN II ...$35.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/LEWIS II or HOLYFIELD/RUIZ II ...$25.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/QAWI or PALOMINO/STRACY ...$150.00 ea.
ROY JONES PRO DEBUT or SANCHEZ/LOPEZ ...$600.00 ea.
JONES/DELVALLE or JONES/JOHNSON ...$30.00 ea.
JONES/GRIFFIN or HAMED/MCCOLLOUGH ...$25.00 ea.
LEONARD/DURAN II or HEARNS/CUEVAS ...$125.00 ea.
LEONARD/DURAN II or ROSSMAN/GALINDEZ ...$50.00 ea.
LEONARD/HEARNS I or II ...$65.00 ea.
LEWIS/BRUNO or LEWIS/MCCALL ...$45.00 ea.
LEWIS/TUCKER or LEWIS/GOLOTA ...$30.00 ea.
LOUIS/SHARKEY or LOUIS/GALENTO ...$600.00 ea.
LOUIS/NOVA or ROBINSON/DOWNES ...$500.00 ea.
MANCINI/CAMACHO or PALOMINO/GREEN ...$75.00 ea.
MANCINI/CHACON or MANCINI/ESPANA ...$25.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/BORGESE & JONES JR./JOHNSON ...$60.00
PAZIENZA/DURAN I or II ...$25.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/JONES or PAZIENZA/GRAHAM ...$40.00 ea.
ROBINSON/TURPIN or DELAHOYA AMATUER ...$300.00 ea.
TYSON/FRANCIS or LEWIS/RUDDOCK ...$50.00 ea.
TYSON/BRUNO or TYSON/HOLMES ...$100.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD I or II ...$20.00 ea.
TYSON/MCNEELEY or HAMED/SOTO ...$15.00 ea.
TYSON/SPINKS or TYSON/WILLIAMS ...$85.00 ea.
TYSON/SMITH or TYSON/SAVARESE ...$45.00 ea.
TYSON/STEWART or TYSON/TILLMAN ...$75.00 ea.
TYSON/TUBBS or TYSON/DOUGLAS ...$250.00 ea.
TYSON/BIGGS or TYSON/BRUNO II ...$80.00 ea.
TYSON/RIBALTA or TYSON/NELSON ...$1000.00 ea.

8 X 10 AUTOGRAPHED PHOTOS

MUHAMMAD ALI ...$500.00
OSCAR DELAHOYA or ROY JONES ...$80.00 ea.
JOE FRAZIER or FELIX TRINIDAD ...$85.00 ea.
LARRY HOLMES or ANDREW GOLOTA ...$45.00 ea.
MAX SCHMELING or ARCHIE MOORE ...$75.00 ea.
JAKE LAMOTTA or BEAU JACK (BW) ...$75.00 ea.
TIM WITHERSPOON or CARL WILLIAMS ...$20.00 ea.
JOHN RUIZ or ERNIE SHAVERS ...$25.00 ea.
WILLIE PEP or FERNANDO VARGAS ...$45.00 ea.
SUGAR RAY LEONARD or FLOYD PATTERSON ...$50.00 ea.
EMILE GRIFFITH or DANA ROSENBLATT ...$15.00 ea.
LENNOX LEWIS ...$85.00
CARMEN BASILIO or HECTOR CAMACHO ...$35.00 ea.
CARLOS PALOMINO or RAY MANCINI ...$35.00 ea.
SAAD MUHAMMAD or VINNY PAZ ...$25.00 ea.
MARVIN HAGLER or KID GAVILAN (BW) ...$75.00 ea.
EVANDER HOLYFIELD ...$100.00
MIKE TYSON ...$150.00
TOMMY MORRISON ...$65.00
KEN NORTON or MELDRICK TAYLOR ...$35.00 ea.
INGEMAR JOHANSSON or IRAN BARKLEY ...$20.00 ea.
ROBERTO DURAN or ARTURO GATTI ...$35.00 ea.

FIGHT T-SHIRTS

MUHAMMAD ALI • CAMACHO/DURAN • TYSON/HOLYFIELD '91
HECTOR CAMACHO • JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ • DELAHOYA/CARR
LEWIS/TYSON • CHAVEZ/CAMACHO • GATTI/MAYWEATHER
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II • DELAHOYA/GATTI • DELAHOYA/KAMAU
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY • DELAHOYA/MOSLEY - II • ALI/NORTON
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY • DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD • FELIX TRINIDAD
DELAHOYA/STURM-HOPKINS/ALLEN • DELAHOYA/VARGAS
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER • OSCAR DELAHOYA • ROBERTO DURAN
V. KLITSCHKO/SANDERS • HAGLER/HEARNS • MORALES/PACQUIAO
HOLYFIELD/HOLMES • HOLYFIELD/MOORER II • LEONARD/HEARNS
HOLYFIELD/RUIZ II • HOLYFIELD/STEWART • ROY JONES JR.
MERCER/MORRISON • MANCINI/HAUGEN • ROCKY MARCIANO
HOPKINS/DELAHOYA • JONES/GONZALEZ • LEONARD/DURAN II
LEONARD/DURAN III • MOSLEY/STONE • LEONARD/NORRIS
HAGLER/LEONARD • MAYWEATHER/HERNANDEZ • GATTI/DORIN
MAYWEATHER/RIOS • MORALES/BARRERA II • 92 OLYMPIC TRIALS
PAZIENZA/ROSENBLATT • IRON MIKE TYSON (XL Only)

***Just $18.00 each* (choose XL or L)**

GREAT MOMENTS IN BOXING

8"x10" B&W Action Photos — Just $4.50 ea.

- Robinson/LaMotta Fight
- Louis-Schmeling Battle
- Dempsey beats Willard
- Marciano slugs Lastarza
- Robinson beats Basilio
- Tunney/Dempsey Battle
- Sanchez/Lopez Battle
- Pep vs Saddler Fight
- Marciano's KOs Walcott
- Robinson slugs Gavilan
- Sanchez beats Gomez
- Ali floors Liston
- Hagler nails Hearns
- Leonard defeats Hearns
- Frazier upsets Ali
- Graziano - Zale classic
- Ali-Foreman Battle
- Marciano KO's Louis

8"x10" B&W Photos - Just $4.75 ea.

Ali • Basilio • Delahoya • Chavez • Corbett • Frazier
Dempsey • Duran • LaMotta • Leonard • J. Johnson
Jones Jr. • Louis • Marciano • Foreman • Hagler
Tyson • Sullivan • Robinson • Pep • Sanchez • Holyfield

8"x10" COLOR PHOTOS - $5.75 ea.

Ali • Delahoya • Hagler vs. Hearns • Mancini
Tyson v. Holyfield • Gatti • Duran • Foreman • LaMotta
Robinson • Hagler • Sanchez • Holyfield • Leonard
Leonard vs. Hearns • Lewis • Barrera • Morales
Ali vs. Frazier • Ali vs. Foreman • Ali KO's Liston
Marciano • Tyson • Jones Jr. • Hagler vs. Duran

BASEBALL CAPS - $17 EA:

GATTI/DORIN • CHAVEZ/DELAHOYA • TYSON/HOLYFIELD • MIKE TYSON
DELAHOYA/CAMACHO • GATTI/MAYWEATHER • TYSON/BERBICK
MOORER/FOREMAN • HAMED/BARERRA • DELAHOYA/RUELAS
PAZIENZA/DURAN • DELAHOYA/WHITAKER • HOPKINS/DELAHOYA
KLITSCHKO/SANDERS • HOLYFIELD/MOORER II • Team DURAN
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY • TYSON/HOLYFIELD II • JONES/GONZALEZ
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY • DELAHOYA/GATTI • TYSON/RUDDOCK II
JONES/PAZIENZA • OSCAR DELAHOYA • MORALES/BARRERA II
TYSON/BRUNO II • DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II • DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD
TYSON/SELDON • CORRALES/CASTILLO • MAYWEATHER/HERNANDEZ

FIGHT POSTERS

CLAY/LISTON (repro.) or ALI/FRAZIER III (Repro) ...$25.00 ea.
CLAY/LISTON (repro.) on Canvas 40" x 24" ...$250.00
ALI/FRAZIER I (LeRoy Neiman Poster) ...$600.00
ALI/FRAZIER I (Closed Circuit) POSTER ...$300.00
ALI/FRAZIER III (Closed Circuit) NEIMAN ...$125.00
ALI/HOLMES ...$125.00
ALI/FOREMAN (Closed Circuit) Poster ...$500.00
GATTI/MAYWEATHER or CHAVEZ/ROBINSON ...$10.00 ea.
BOWE/GOLOTA or BOWE/GOLOTA II ...$50.00 ea.
CAMACHO/ROSARIO or CHAVEZ/CAMACHO ...$75.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/DELAHOYA or CHAVEZ/ALI ...$10.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/RAMIREZ or CHAVEZ/MITCHELL ...$75.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/TAYLOR or CHAVEZ/TAYLOR II ...$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/HOPKINS (English or Spanish) ...$10.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/CAMACHO or DELAHOYA/RIVERA ...$20.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/CAMPANELLA, Jones/Tate ...$45.00
DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD ...$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY or DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II ...$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/VARGAS or DELAHOYA/GATTI ...$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY or DELAHOYA/CASTILLEJO ...$20.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/RUELAS or DELAHOYA/HERNANDEZ ...$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER or DELAHOYA/GONZALEZ ...$20.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II ...$50.00
DEMPSEY/TUNNEY II (Reproduction) ...$25.00
DURAN/BENITEZ or DURAN/CAMACHO ...$25.00 ea.
FOREMAN/GRIMSLEY or FOREMAN/MORRISON ...$30.00 ea.
FOREMAN/SAVARESE or HERNANDEZ/GERENA ...$5.00 ea.
HAGLER/DURAN or FOREMAN/COONEY ...$35.00 ea.
HAGLER/HEARNS or FOREMAN/MOORER ...$175.00
HAGLER/LEONARD or HAGLER/MUGABI ...$65.00 ea.
HAMED/BADILLO or HAMED/MOLINA ...$10.00 ea.
HAMED/CABRERRA or HAMED/HARDY ...$15.00 ea.
HAMED/JOHNSON or HAMED/VAZQUEZ ...$10.00 ea.
HEARNS/BARKLEY II or LAZARRAGA/MEDINA ...$10.00 ea.
HEARNS/HILL or HEARNS/ROLDAN ...$30.00 ea.
HOLMES/COONEY or HOLMES/SMITH ...$35.00 ea.
HOLMES/SHAVERS or HOLMES/M. SPINKS ...$30.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/BOWE or MORALES/PACQUIAO ...$25.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/BOWE III or LEONARD/CAMACHO ...$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/CZYZ or HOLYFIELD/FOREMAN ...$35.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/DOUGLAS ...$60.00
HOLYFIELD/HOLMES or HOLMES/MERCER ...$10.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/LEWIS ...$85.00
HOLYFIELD/MERCER or JONES/PAZIENZA ...$45.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/MOORER I or II ...$20.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/RAHMAN or JONES/WOODS ...$25.00 ea.
HOPKINS/EASTMAN or BARRERA/AYALA ...$10.00 ea.
TYSON/GOLOTA or JONES/GRANT ...$35.00 ea.
JONES/GRIFFIN II or JONES/JOHNSON ...$20.00 ea.
JONES/HARDING or JONES/HARMON ...$25.00 ea.
JONES/GONZALEZ or MCCULLOUGH/ZARAGOSA ...$15.00 ea.
LEONARD/DURAN II ...$40.00
LEONARD/DURAN III or LEONARD/LALONDE ...$45.00 ea.
LEONARD/HEARNS I or II ...$40.00 ea.
LEWIS/GOLOTA or LEWIS/TUCKER ...$10.00 ea.
LEWIS/GRANT or LEWIS/BOTHA ...$30.00 ea.
LEWIS/RAHMAN or LEWIS/TYSON ...$25.00 ea.
MANCINI/CAMACHO or MORRISON/LEWIS ...$45.00 ea.
MANCINI/CHACON or PAZIENZA/DURAN II ...$20.00 ea.
MARCIANO/CHARLES (Theatre, folds) ...$750.00
MARCIANO/MOORE (Professionally Framed) ...$8,000.00
MARCIANO/WALCOTT (Reprint) or LEWIS/TUA ...$25.00 ea.
MAYWHEATHER/CORRALES or MAYWHEATHER/CASTILLO ...$20.00 ea.
MORALES/BARRERA II (English or Spanish) ...$20.00 ea.
MORALES/BARRERA III or MORALES/AYALA ...$10.00 ea.
MORALES/MCCULLOUGH or MORALES/RAMIREZ ...$5.00 ea
MORRISON/HIDE or SAVARESE/DOUGLAS ...$10.00 ea.
MORRISON/MERCER or MORRISON/RUDDOCK ...$35.00 ea.
MOSLEY/TAYLOR or MOSLEY/DIAZ ...$10.00 ea.
NELSON/HERNANDEZ or MORALES/BUENO ...$5.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/CAMACHO or PAZIENZA/DURAN ...$50.00 ea.
TAPIA/AYALA or PAZIENZA/ROSENBLATT ...$20.00 ea.
TRINIDAD/WHITAKER or TRINIDAD/PETTWAY ...$20.00 ea.
TRINIDAD/THIAM or TRINIDAD/VARGAS ...$35.00 ea.
TRINIDAD/CHERIFI or TRIPLE HITTER - Duran/Sims ...$30.00 ea.
TYSON/TUBBS or TYSON/BERBICK (LeRoy Neiman) ...$150.00 ea.
TYSON/BRUNO II or HOLYFIELD/BYRD ...$20.00 ea.
TYSON/DOUGLAS or TYSON/SMITH ...$225.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLMES or TYSON/BIGGS ...$35.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD '96 or TYSON/SELDON ...$65.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD II - 5/3/97 (Cancelled) or DELAHOYA/CARR ...$5.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD II or MAYWHEATHER/C. HERNANDEZ ...$10.00 ea.
TYSON/RUDDOCK II or TYSON/SAVARESE ...$75.00 ea.
TYSON/STEWART or TYSON/FRANCIS ...$50.00 ea.
TYSON/TUCKER or TYSON/TILLMAN ...$45.00 ea.
IRON MIKE TYSON or SUGAR RAY LEONARD POSTER ...$15.00 ea.
HBO POSTER featuring 11 color photos of fights ...$5.00
Roger Clemens vs. Pedro Martinez BB Fight Poster ...$50.00

www.BoxingPosters.com

Ordering Info.: Please include $7 P&H per package (Foreign Countries $15 per package ground or $25 air)
Send To: BOB PACE, 141 ROUTE ONE, Box 304, Rowley, MA 01969 or call w/AMEX, Disc., VISA or MC - (781) 284-4954

[On The Move]

The saga of two fighters going in different directions

By Joe Santoliquito

Andre Berto/Winter Haven, FL

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Berto: 14-carat prospect

Andre Berto prides himself on knowing what is real and what is fake in the jewelry business. Promoter Lou DiBella has the same discerning eye when it comes to mining undiscovered jewels in the boxing industry. DiBella thinks he may have found one in Berto, an undefeated welterweight prospect.

"I believed for a long time he was the best prospect out of the 2004 Olympic class," DiBella said. "In fact, I started looking at him prior to the Olympics. Andre was the guy that had the best combination of power, poise, and ring generalship of the group. I think he's the best prospect in boxing. I thought for a long time that he was the 'The Andre.' Not the other Andre [Ward]."

DiBella is expecting Berto, 10-0 (8), to follow a similar, yet faster, timeline than another fighter DiBella plucked from the United States Olympic team, middleweight world champion Jermain Taylor.

"Berto's a good kid that I want to bring along, like I did Jermain," DiBella said. "We're in no rush. It's going to be when he's ready; he's looked sensational so far. I want to up the ante in each fight. He needs to get some rounds under his belt, but I'm thrilled with his development. This is the kind of kid that other people call me and tell how great he is. He's getting that kind of buzz within the industry. He's fun to watch as he develop all the tools of a great fighter."

Currently, Berto works with a tiny set of tools every day, fixing, repairing, and evaluating jewelry. It's a business that he's been involved with since he was 13 years old working at the 14K Jewelry Outlet, located in Winter Haven, Florida.

"I started here sweeping floors and taking out the garbage," Berto said. "I've done this every day. The business is something I've just picked up. The managers here are real good friends of mine."

If Berto, 22, is that rare boxing jewel that so many think he is, there's a chance sometime in the near future, he could be staring across the ring at Joel Julio, another prized prospect with a murderous punch.

"You look at the welterweight division and it's going to be Berto and Julio in the future; those two kids will dominate the division," DiBella predicted.

For now, Berto is working at the jewelry shop and training for fights. Eventually, he would like to make a living boxing. It's always nice to have another skill to fall back on. Berto just doesn't want to have to fall back on it too soon.

Scott Pemberton/Dartmouth, MA

PHOTO BY JERRI COLI

Time for "The Sandman" to say goodnight

One thing Scott "The Sandman" Pemberton was always able to rely on was his chin. In dire moments, when he was on the end of a barrage, the chin held true and stable. It, along with his formidable punching power, offered him a chance to overcome rough spots and rally back to win, or at least make a game fight. Pemberton also realized that when the chin went, he would soon be leaving boxing.

Pemberton's granite chin showed a considerable chink one snowy mid-February night against the modest-punching power of Peter Manfredo Jr., the reality TV star from the hit boxing show *The Contender*. Pemberton succumbed to an avalanche of Manfredo punches in the third round.

Entering the fight, Pemberton, 29-5-1 (24), represented by far the biggest step up in competition for Manfredo, 25-3 (11). But Manfredo came right at Pemberton, showing little respect for his opponent's punch or ability to tangle well at close quarters. It didn't matter. Manfredo stood right in front of the veteran and he picked him apart with quick combinations and an accurate right hand that rarely missed.

Pemberton was sluggish, slow, and at times defenseless, taking blow after blow.

The second round brought more of the same, as Manfredo maintained his presence in the pocket, beating Pemberton to the punch and easily eluding any counters.

But the third round proved to be the real end for Pemberton. Early in the round, Manfredo stunned Pemberton with a left hook, and then dropped him with a right uppercut to the jaw. Pemberton got up, but Manfredo kept coming. He went right after the weary Pemberton, ripping shots to the body and sending him down a second time with a right hand to the head. One final Manfredo charge was all it took to convince referee Richard Flaherty to call the bout off at 2:06 of the third round.

Pemberton offered no excuses afterward. He had come off of a brutal two-round shellacking against then-IBF super middleweight titleholder Jeff Lacy in November and now this against someone Pemberton once sparred with, and who had only 10 knockouts in his previous 27 fights.

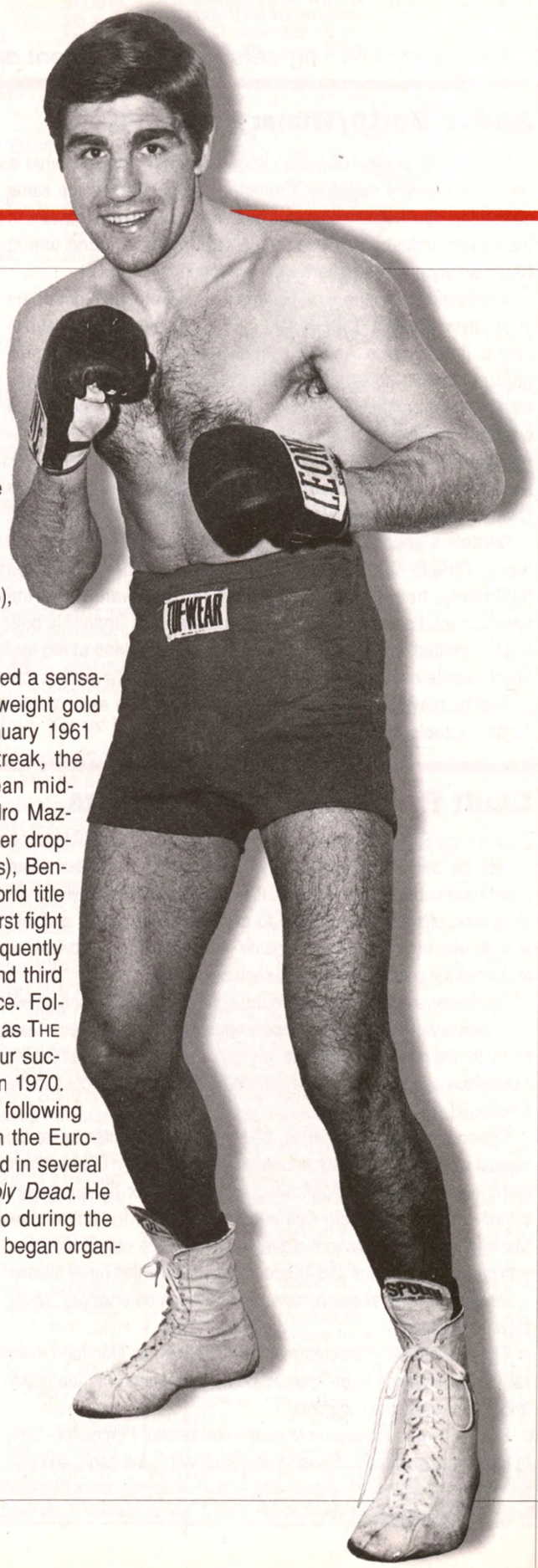
"What can I say?" Pemberton offered. "Maybe I got old tonight. I didn't feel comfortable getting into the ring tonight. I felt very stiff and awkward, and I never got into any mode."

After the Lacy fight, Pemberton announced his retirement, before having a change of heart and signing to fight Manfredo. Losing to Manfredo in a blowout may force the 39-year-old to think again about leaving the ring for good. Determination and a granite chin always enabled him to stay in give-and-take fights, but fighting on with little more than sheer determination going for him won't prolong his career and could easily lead to additional beatings. ■

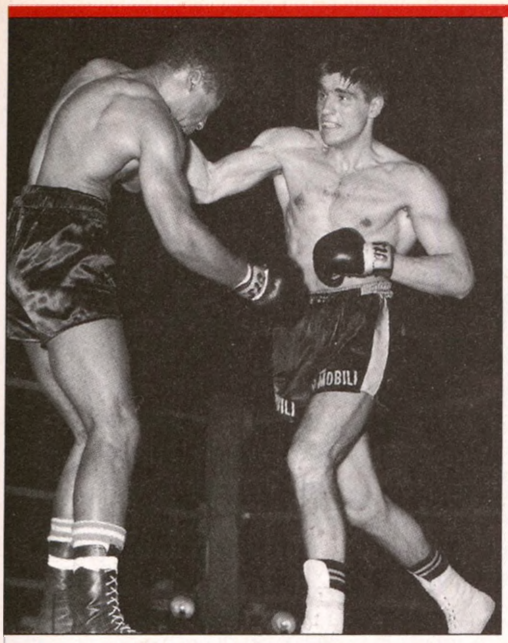
Hall of Fame Profile

A thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Giovanni Benvenuti

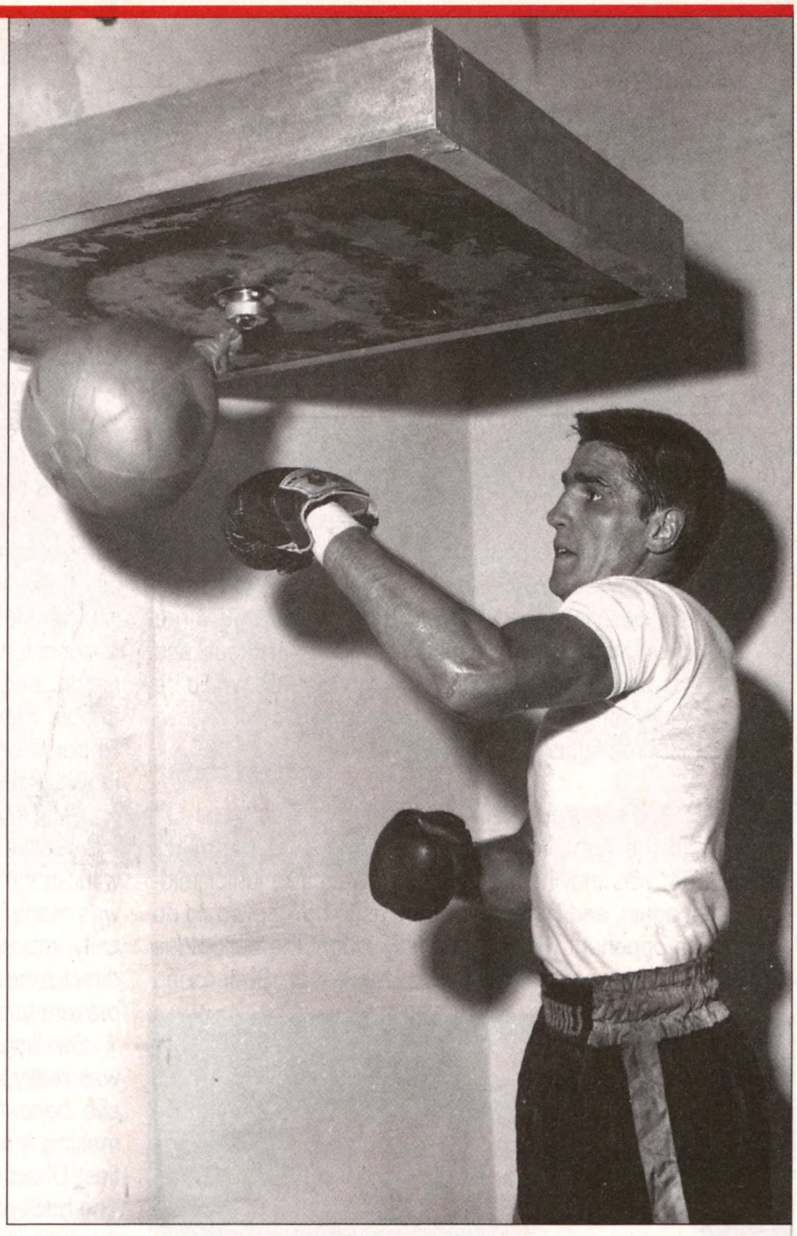


Nickname: Nino
Birthdate: April 26, 1938
Birthplace: Trieste, Italy
Weight Class: Middleweight
Height: 5'11"
Professional Record: 82-7-1 (35)
Titles: World Junior Middleweight (June 18, 1963-June 25, 1966), World Middleweight (April 17, 1967-September 29, 1967; March 4, 1968-November 7, 1970)
Best Performances: Emile Griffith (W 15, W 15), Luis Rodriguez (KO 11), Sandro Mazzinghi (KO 6, W 15), Gaspar Ortega (W 10), Tom Bethea (KO 8)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 1992
Background: The son of a fisherman, Benvenuti topped a sensational, undefeated amateur career by winning the welterweight gold medal at the 1960 Olympic Games. He turned pro in January 1961 and went undefeated in his first 65 bouts. During that streak, the speedy, crisp hitting boxer won the Italian and European middleweight titles, and in '65 he stopped fellow Italian Sandro Mazzinghi for the world junior middleweight championship. After dropping the 154-pound belt to Ki Soo Kim in '66 (his first loss), Benvenuti moved up to the 160-pound division and won the world title by outpointing Emile Griffith over 15 rounds. This was the first fight of his memorable trilogy with Griffith, and Benvenuti subsequently lost and regained the middleweight crown in his second and third bouts with the New Yorker, all of which went the distance. Following his final victory over Griffith, Benvenuti was selected as THE RING's 1968 Fighter of the Year. He then went on to tally four successful defenses before losing the title to Carlos Monzon in 1970. After suffering a second kayo defeat at Monzon's hands the following year, Benvenuti retired from the ring. Always popular with the European jet set, the handsome and charismatic boxer appeared in several movies, including the spaghetti western *Alive Or Preferably Dead.* He has also worked extensively in Italian television and radio during the ensuing years, covering various sporting events. In 2002, he began organizing amateur boxing events in Italy.



Benvenuti is pictured on the attack against American Teddy Wright during a December 1963 bout in Rome that the Italian won via 10-round decision. It was Nino's 41st consecutive victory as a professional.

Benvenuti's longer reach came in handy when he traded rights with Mazzinghi during their 1965 battle for the junior middleweight title, which Nino won with a sixth-round knockout.



Although known for unorthodox training techniques such as swimming, Benvenuti also used traditional methods such as pounding the speedbag.

Benvenuti and actor Giuliano Gemma (left) try on top hats that were part of the costumes they wore in the boxer's movie debut.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Benvenuti is reunited with Griffith in 2002 at the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York, where both men are enshrined.

[The Fight Doctor]

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

What The Doctor Saw

Whenever you watch a fight on television, it is impossible to not be swayed by the commentators. On the other hand, I often wish the fans had an inside view of what was evolving in the ring from a medical perspective. As a ring physician, I was a doctor first and a fan second. I couldn't really pay attention to how many punches were landing, but instead I focused on how those punches affected the competitors.

On February 26, 2006, the Shane Mosley-Fernando Vargas pay-per-view card in Las Vegas illustrated three medical situations: a one-eyed fighter, a bad knockout, and the hazards befalling an aging boxer. I thought this would be an opportunity for you, the reader, to review a doctor's viewpoint of the three fights in question.

Shane Mosley KO 10 Fernando Vargas

Prior to the fight, the following weighed on my mind: Mosley, 34, was moving up from welterweight to junior middleweight again, and I was concerned as to how he would do against an opponent who successfully fought the bulk of his professional career at 154 pounds. Moreover, Shane had already had 45 fights, which is a fairly large number, so ring age could be a factor.

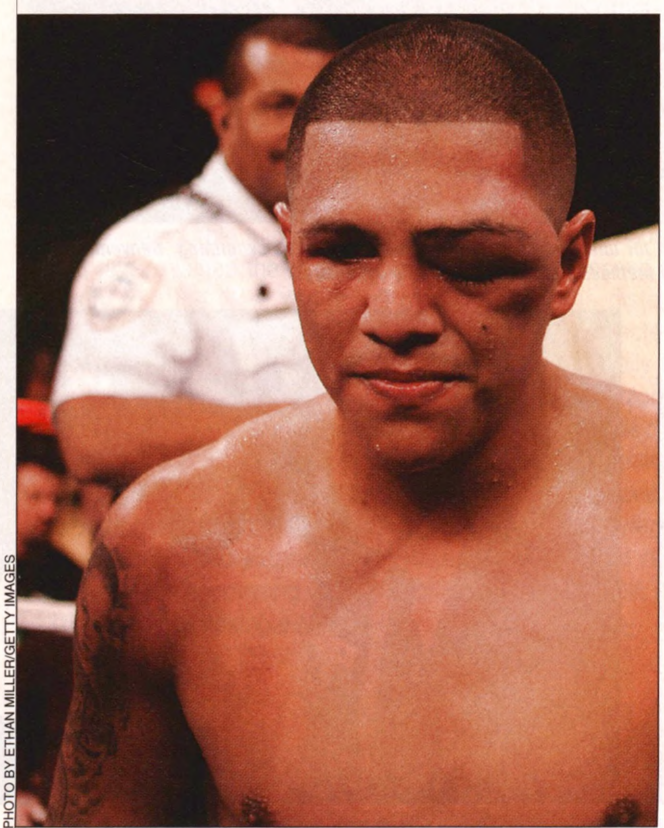


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Vargas' eye will have to be tested before he fights again

Furthermore, over the last few years, the 28-year-old Vargas had been plagued by lengthy periods in inactivity due to lower back problems, fighting twice in 2003, not at all in '04, and twice in '05. Although he had only two losses in 28 bouts going in, both were devastating stoppages, and sometimes a fighter is never the same physically and/or emotionally following those kinds of punishing defeats.

Thankfully, Shane and Fernando had paid great attention to conditioning. Both fighters exhibited great balance, coordination, and never lost mental focus. Vargas, who often had trouble with his weight, has a new conditioning specialist in Robert Ferguson, and I believe his assistance was paramount in preventing Fernando from tiring in the later rounds.

Early in the fight, Vargas suffered a contusion over his left eye. Between rounds, cutman Jacob Duran applied pressure with an ice bag to reduce the swelling. Later on, an attempt was made to push the swelling out of the way. This is physically impossible and definitely worsened the swelling. Firm direct pressure with a cold piece of metal (an Enswell) will prevent further damage to the underlying tissue.

Swelling, in and of itself, is typically not dangerous. What was really important, however, was the condition of Vargas' eye *beneath* the swelling. Did he have a medical condition making it more pronounced? There were several possibilities: Direct trauma to the eye can cause a detached retina. The back of the eyeball detaches, and fluid leaks from inside the eyeball under the tear. In addition, a fighter could sustain damage to the optic nerve, the nerve that connects the eye to the brain and allows your brain to understand what you are seeing. Finally, a fractured orbit (eye socket) can result in local bruising and injury to the nerves and muscles that control the globe of the eye.

All of these conditions, if not diagnosed early, can result in blindness and necessitate immediate surgery. As a result, it is imperative that the ring physician adequately examine the eye *before* it swells shut. Between rounds, the physician needs to palpate the bony orbit and make certain the boxer can see, doesn't have double vision, and has a normal reactive pupil.

In Vargas' case, it was not an issue of "if" the fight should be stopped; it was a matter of "when." During the ninth round, many felt Fernando was no longer able to adequately defend himself. The fight needed to stop not because of his disfigurement, but to prevent a career-ending injury. That simply could not be adequately determined between rounds. After the match, Fernando was required to have a computerized tomography (CT) of his left orbit and see an ophthalmologist.

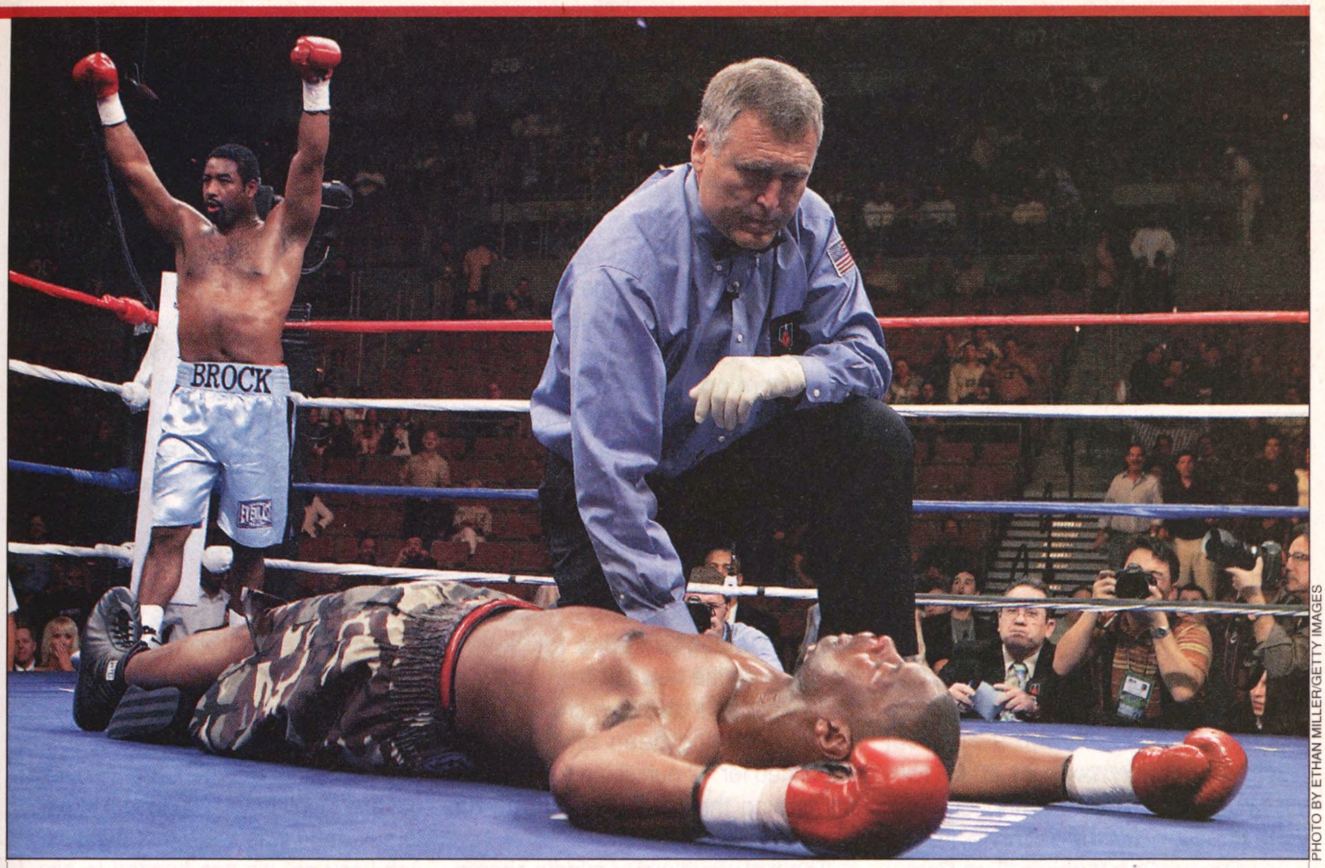


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Lawrence suffered Grade III concussion versus Brock

Calvin Brock KO 6 Zuri Lawrence

That Brock knocked out Zuri Lawrence was not a surprise, but the length of Zuri's loss of consciousness was worrisome. The severity of a kayo is often judged by the time it takes for a fighter to regain consciousness. Zuri suffered a Grade III concussion, the most severe grade.

When a fighter is knocked out, the ABC's (airway-breathing-circulation) must be immediately established. Emergency personnel must clear the airway, the mouthpiece should be removed if at all possible, and then oxygen should be administered. It is also crucial to limit neck mobility with a neck collar, as any fighter who falls hard could have a potential spinal cord injury. During this time, the doctors are performing "neuro checks." These are simple on-the-spot tests to determine the seriousness of the injury.

Zuri was lucky. He was transported to Valley Hospital, had a negative head CT, and will be cleared to fight again in a few months. However, at age 35 and having never knocked out any of his opponents, it may be time for him to consider another career. Moreover, a serious concussion can make a fighter susceptible to further injuries.

Jhonny Gonzalez KO 8 Mark Johnson

Despite a long successful career, 34-year-old Johnson had not fought since he was knocked out by Ivan Hernandez in September 2004. Although Johnson was a former titleholder, it was of concern as to how he would do against Gonzalez, 10 years his junior and a boxer who had won his last 17 fights, 15 by knockout

Johnson showed up at the weigh-in weighing 119½ pounds, and he was unable to lose any additional weight after 30 minutes in a sauna wearing a plastic sweat suit. There are multiple reasons why fighters go up in weight as they age. First and foremost, older fighters fight less often and tend to not train regularly between bouts. We all know it is more difficult to lose weight as we age. It is much easier to just move up or give up.

It was clear to see that Johnson no longer had his legs, and as a result he could no longer escape punches. In the eighth round, after being knocked down for the second time, he had taken enough and declined to get up.

Johnson did the right thing and should be commended. He was never really hurt, so it would have been very difficult for the ring physician or the referee to have recommended and defended stopping the fight. There is no shame in a fighter recognizing he has had enough. In fact, it demonstrates intelligence and insight.

What we witnessed that night was a former titleholder attempting to regain his former status. He deserved the opportunity, but understood his limitations and protected his future by retiring.

The three fights described above exemplify common fight scenarios. In the end, it is the ring physician who bares the ultimate responsibility for the fighters' lives. Therefore, the next time you watch a fight, reflect on the process the ring physician must explore in an effort to enable a fight to precede to its natural conclusion. ■

Come Out Writing

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Kudos For Calzaghe

After watching one of the most horrifically beautiful demolitions of a rising star that I've ever seen, my jaw is still lying somewhere on the floor between my sofa and the coffee table. I'm not so surprised that another big fish from a small pond got swallowed up faster than a goldfish during college rush week, but I'm just flabbergasted at how Joe Calzaghe has been the best-kept secret since the whereabouts of D.B. Cooper.

Give Calzaghe kudos for finally emerging as the new fair-haired boy of boxing, but let's also give credit to Jeff Lacy for having been taken to the woodshed for 12 punishing rounds and still finding the heart to be throwing punches right up to the end.

The new RING super middle champ deserves a top-10 pound-for-pound ranking

JEFF BOLLINGER
schlup@earthlink.net

Congratulations to newly crowned super middleweight king Joe Calzaghe for a fantastic performance in his victory over Jeff Lacy. Many people doubted Joe's chin, heart, and above all, his right to be classified as the best super middle in the world. I hope what happened in Manchester proved a lesson not only to Lacy, but also those across the pond that thought that Calzaghe wasn't the real deal and worthy of a place in the pound-for-pound ratings.

IAN BANKS
Wolverhampton, England

I have been reading your magazine for a long time now and the only problem I have is the way no one gives British fighters a chance before a big fight. I was sick of reading about how Joe Calzaghe was gonna get knocked out and didn't have a chance. I'm proud to say that I was there that night when Jeff Lacy got his ass handed to him. I just hope that people will show a little respect toward Brits from now on.

SHAUN STEWART
Lancaster, England

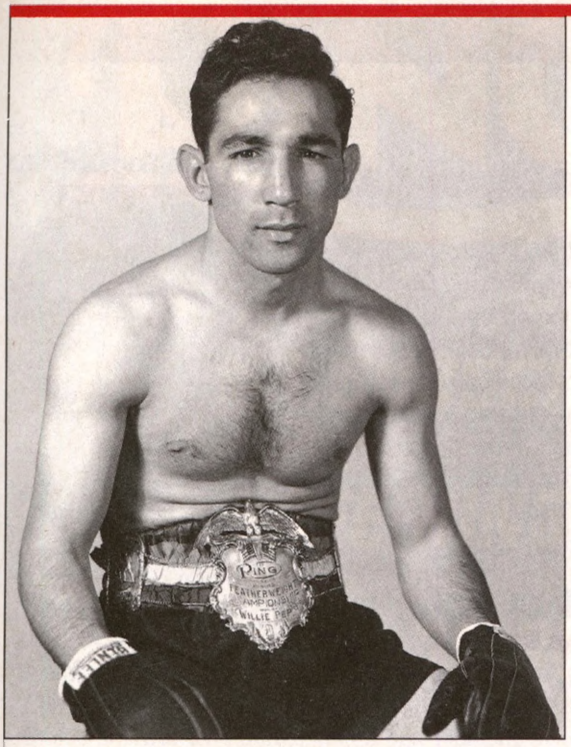
Magnificent Match

I was privileged to be in attendance the night Ricky Hatton won the junior welterweight championship, and, needless to say, the fact that a British fighter holds a legitimate world title and was selected as THE RING's 2005 Fighter of the Year fills me with immense pride. Hatton versus Floyd Mayweather is a fight that must be made, and while predicting a winner is far from easy, Hatton may just have the intensity to drag Mayweather into a darker place than Jose Luis Castillo managed during their first fight. Regardless of the outcome, Mayweather-Hatton would surely be a magnificent fight.

I.J. GREGORY
i.j.gregory@wmin.ac.uk

PHOTO BY PAUL ELLIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Joe Calzaghe's one-sided thrashing of previously unbeaten Jeff Lacy prompted numerous readers from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean to write in praise of the Welshman, including Jeff Bollinger, Ian Banks, and Shaun Stewart.



Former featherweight champion Willie Pep is currently confined to a nursing home. Reader Hilario Andrade recently visited the Hall of Famer and has provided an address for those who would like to write to Willie.

Pep Prescription

I recently visited Hall of Famer Willie Pep, the former featherweight champion of the world. Unfortunately, Willie is in a nursing home, and when I approached him, he was slumped over with his head almost in his lap. But as soon as he recognized he had visitors, the old champ sat up, crossed his legs, and folded his arms—his pride and dignity still intact. I'm sure Willie would love to hear from his many fans, who can write to him at the following address:

Willie Pep
Haven Health Center
60 West Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067-3518

HILARIO ANDRADE
Brockton, MA

Tarver Ducking Johnson

I just heard some boxing news on television that made it clear that light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver wouldn't be giving Glen Johnson the next shot at him. Instead, Antonio will be fighting Bernard Hopkins. In fact, it sounded like he might never give Johnson a rubber match. I don't understand why. Johnson is a real working-class hero, and I think that it's pretty cowardly and arrogant of Tarver not to give him another chance at a decent payday. After all, it was Tarver who was in a similar position not too long ago. He had to practically beg for a big-money fight with Roy Jones. Shame on Tarver for not being just as generous to Johnson as Jones was to him.

MARCUS WALSH
Kingston, Ontario

Shane Still Shines

I recently watched the Shane Mosley-Fernando Vargas fight, and it was good to see both back in a big fight again. I was very happy to see Mosley throw combinations and fight like the fighter who was once the pound-for-pound leader. But, as usual, the HBO commentators picked him apart by saying his punches weren't that hard. One look at Vargas' face tells me otherwise.

In his last big fight prior to Vargas, Shane lost a split decision to Winky Wright, who is ranked number two in THE RING's P-4-P ratings. So let's give Mosley the credit he deserves. He's still one of the best fighters in boxing.

ANDY BUTICA
andythegreat1313@aol.com

Winky-Taylor Talk

I'm responding to Jose Gutierrez' letter in the April 2006 issue of THE RING EXTRA ("What's So Great About Winky"). Wright is damn good and has proven it on several occasions. I don't believe his performance against Sam Soliman was a question of Winky's skills fading. Soliman just has a difficult style to face. I also think the comment under the Wright-Soliman result in the "TV Fights Of The Month"—"Don't be fooled by this; Jermain doesn't win a round against Winky"—is going a bit too far. Taylor is a skilled fighter and is as much a threat to Wright as Wright is to him. Don't be surprised if Taylor wins this one.

BOBBY DAVIS
vengeance_embodied_666@yahoo.com ■

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Shane Mosley has Fernando Vargas covering up en route to a TKO victory in Las Vegas. Reader Andy Butica was impressed with Mosley's performance and writes to remind everybody that "Sugar Shane" is still among boxing's elite.

[Looking Ahead]

By Joe Santoliquito

Tarver-Hopkins: Who Will Have The Last Word?

Antonio Tarver will go back to being the *real* Tarver in the ring on June 10, slipping out of his movie character Mason "The Line" Dixon role, to take on a *real* fighter from Philadelphia, **Bernard Hopkins**. The loquacious pair will fight for Tarver's world light heavyweight RING championship belt at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, on HBO Pay-Per-View.

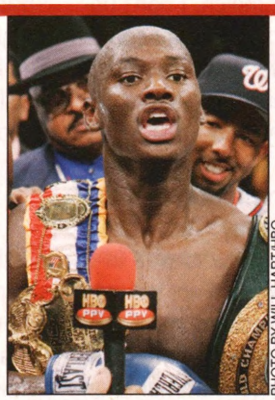


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Will Tarver have the last word against Hopkins?

These are two top fighters at an interesting juncture of their careers. Hopkins is coming off consecutive losses against middleweight champion **Jermain Taylor**, while Tarver allowed **Roy Jones** to run around the ring for 12 rounds in his last fight, satisfied to coast to a lackluster decision. Why would anyone think these two could still put on an exciting fight?

Because, said **Joe DeGuardia**, the head of Star Boxing, the Tarver-Hopkins promoter, "One of them will shut up after this fight. Hopkins has said he wants to shut Tarver up, and I know Antonio has said the same about Hopkins. There is fuel for this fight. We're selling this as a battle of the legends. It's going to be the end of a legend or a legendary finish. It's a lasting feather in Tarver's cap if he can put away Bernard. This is Hopkins' last fight regardless of what he does. This fight might be a lot more challenging and exciting than people think."

Will it be **Hagler-Hearns** II? Doubtful. But, with two legacies hanging in the balance, it sure could be fairly exciting.

Gatti-Baldomir

After months of speculation, **Carlos Baldomir**'s first defense of the welterweight world championship will come against **Arturo "Thunder" Gatti** on July 22 (HBO), at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The venue is fitting, since the popular Gatti has fought before sellout or near-sellout crowds in Atlantic City his last seven fights.

Baldomir, 42-9-6 (12), placed himself in position to earn a reported $1.45-million, by far the biggest payday of his career, when he upset **Zab Judah** in January. Gatti, 40-7 (31), garnered a welterweight ranking by handing **Thomas Damgaard** an 11th-round TKO later the same month.

Baldomir may be a world champion with limited skills, but he outworked Judah and he'll enter the Gatti match 18-0-2 (8) in his last 20 bouts over a five-year period. Gatti did rebound nicely from the six-round beating he took from **Floyd Mayweather** last summer, but his hands are fragile and his defense still leaky.

Two technically limited guys who do nothing but come forward and throw punches, huh? Sounds an awful like Gatti-Ward IV. We'll see.

PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

Gatti will get the first crack at Baldomir

Listen Up

Steve Cunningham has been waiting for a shot at a cruiserweight belt for some time. It looks as if "USS Cunningham" may have to wait a little longer. He originally had a May 6 date on Showtime against world cruiserweight champion **O'Neil Bell**. But that fight was postponed until perhaps early-June due to Bell getting teeth extracted.

For Cunningham, it's all about finally getting a chance to prove he's the best cruiser in the world, after toiling for years on Don King undercards and in off-TV fights. Cunningham was almost forced into the shadows again, since the original May 6 date conflicted with the HBO Pay-Per-View fight between **Oscar De La Hoya**, making his first return to the ring since 2004, against wildman **Ricardo Mayorga**.

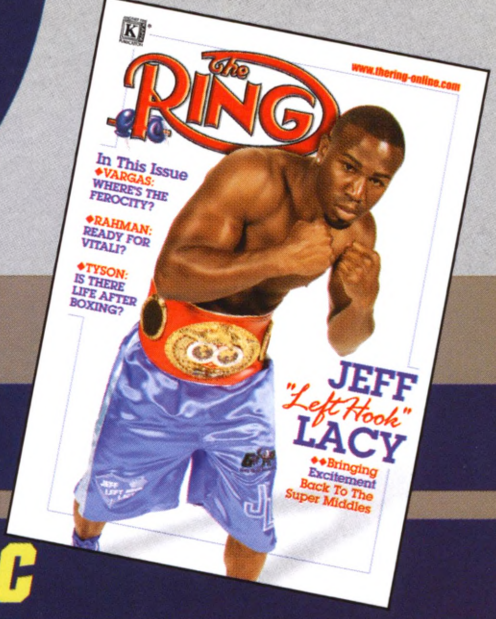
Whatever date the fight takes place, Cunningham is entering the Bell fight with a great deal of self-imposed pressure. "I want to impress people who see me and try to look as good as I can," said Cunningham, 19-0 (10). "I want to beat Bell impressively. I have to. To me, O'Neil is a very smart fighter. I have to be craftier, more intelligent. I have to fight my smartest fight. Bell can move a little bit, but he can't deal with movement, and I know because I used to spar with him. I still haven't showcased everything yet, and the only thing that I changed in my training camp is the intensity."

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Cunningham finally gets his chance

Cunningham also enters this fight with a heavy personal burden: His baby daughter **Kennedy** suffers from a heart disease and has already undergone two surgeries to correct the defect. "Me and my wife are dealing with it," Cunningham said. "It's only a burden when you make it a burden." ■

The RING



A RING SUBSCRIPTION

A FREE RING ALMANAC

& 35 BUCKS IN YOUR POCKET!

$35! That's what you'll save over the regular newsstand price when you subscribe to 12 issues of The Ring. Why not save nearly 50 percent and enjoy the convenience of having each issue delivered straight to your door? If you can think of one reason why not, then factor this into your decision:

Subscribe for 12 issues and we'll send you—absolutely free—a copy of the The Ring Boxing Almanac And Book Of Facts. That's a $5.95 value ... free!

So here it is: 6 issues of The Ring, 6 issues of The Ring Extra—and the 2006 Ring Almanac. More than $41 in savings (including the Almanac) and no more disappointments over newsstand sellouts!

Good deal? GREAT DEAL!

Send To: **London Publishing Co.**, P.O. Box 2085, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8185

☐ YES, I would like to take advantage of your money-saving offer. I have indicated below which subscription plan I am ordering and have enclosed my payment or provided my credit card information.

TWO WAYS TO SAVE!

Please Check Off The One You Wish To Order:

1 Save More Than $11 Over Newsstand Price! LRNG

☐ THE RING/THE RING EXTRA (6 issues) for $30.00 ANPR06

2 Monster Deal—More Than $40 Off Newsstand! LRNG

☐ THE RING/THE RING EXTRA (12 issues) for $48.00. Plus, THE RING 2006 Almanac, for free! AALM06

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to London Publishing Co.)

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card #__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

Expiration Date: ___/___
MO/YR

Signature: _____

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____APT.____

CITY_____STATE____ZIP_____

☐ New Subscription ☐ Renewal

FOR CANADA AND ALL OTHER COUNTRIES: $36.00 FOR 6 ISSUES ($48.00 AIRMAIL); $60.00 FOR 12 ISSUES ($84.00 AIRMAIL). INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS ONLY IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE YOU RECEIVE YOUR FIRST MAGAZINE. OFFER EXPIRES JANUARY 31, 2007. THE RING ALMANAC AVAILABLE ONLY WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.

7432

CALL 1.800.777.0313 or visit EVERLASTBOXING.COM for your FREE PROFESSIONAL BOXING EQUIPMENT CATALOG from EVERLAST featuring James Toney and Marco Antonio Barrera.